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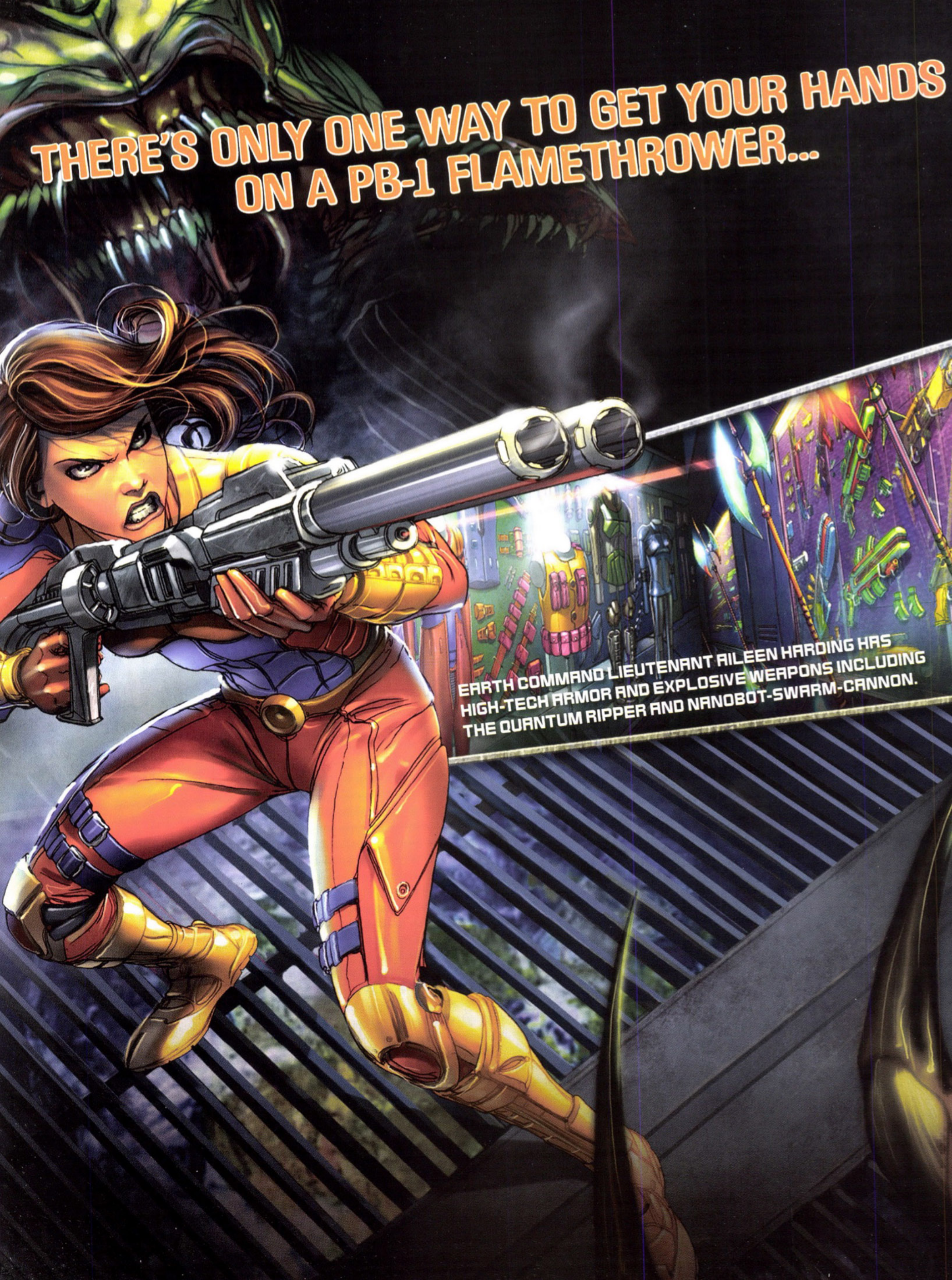
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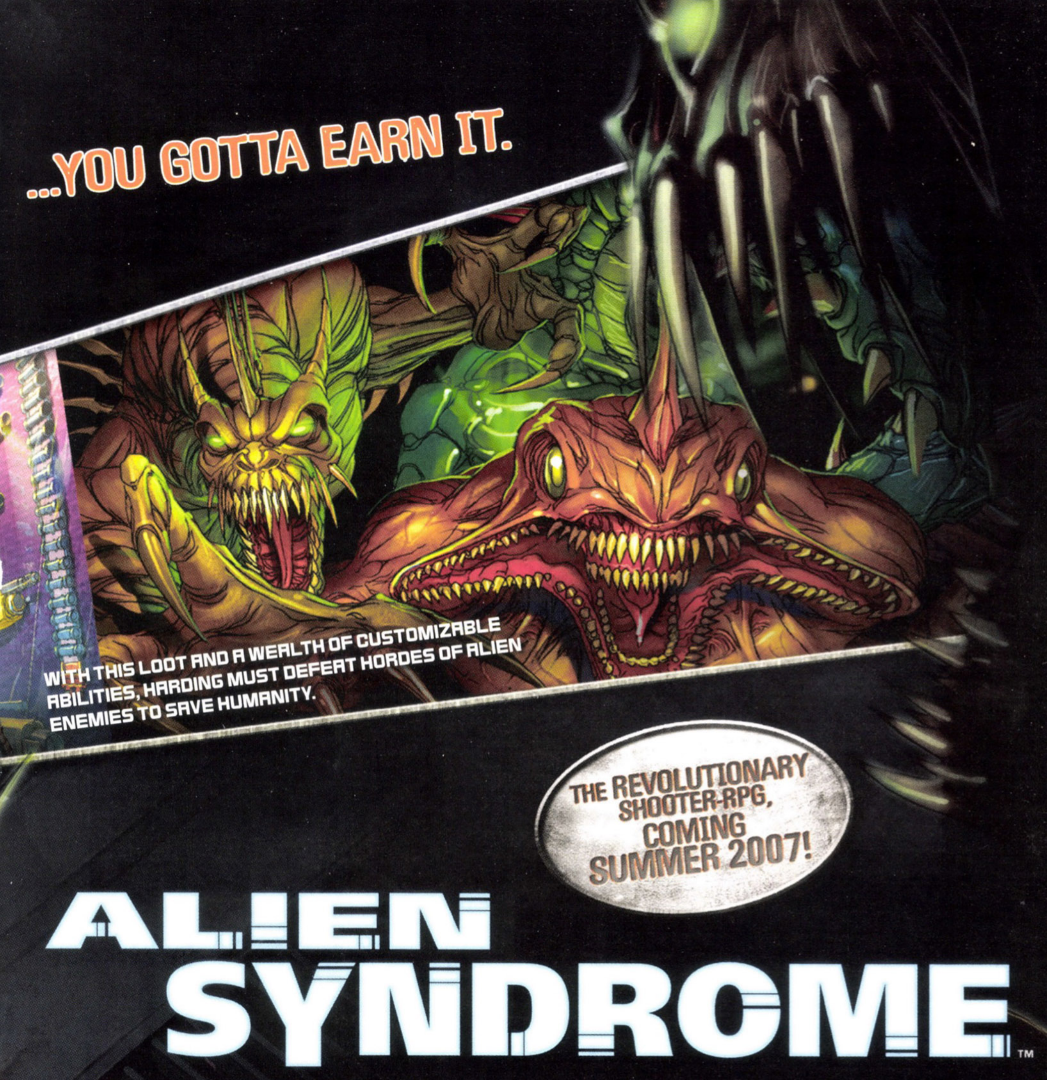
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In the Labyrinth of Etrian Odyssey, every choice is yours...

NINTENDO POWER

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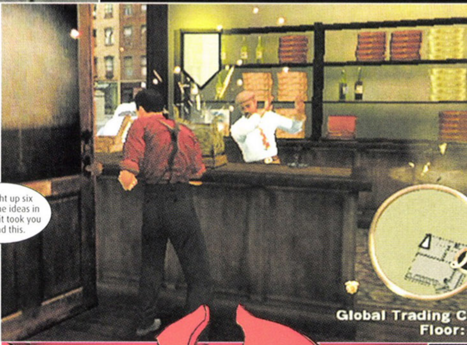

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ALEX RIDER

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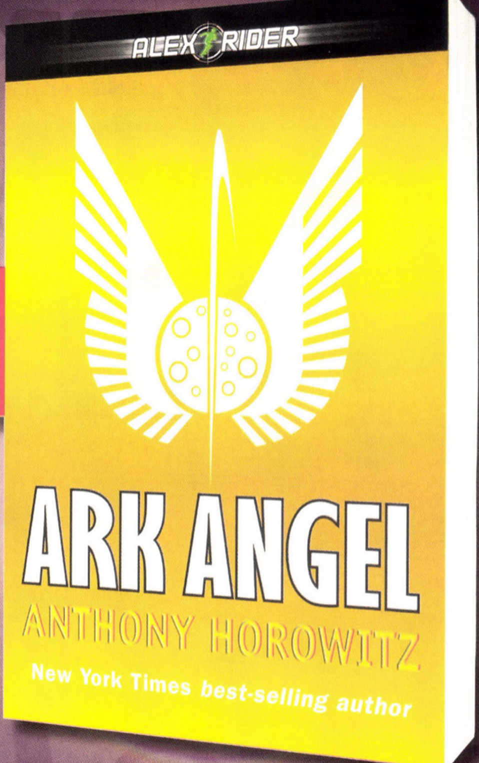
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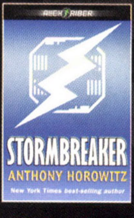
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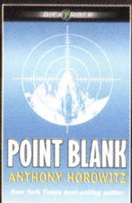
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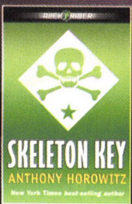
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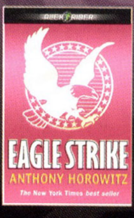
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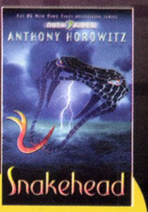
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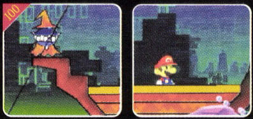
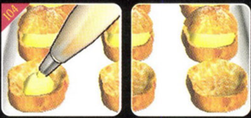
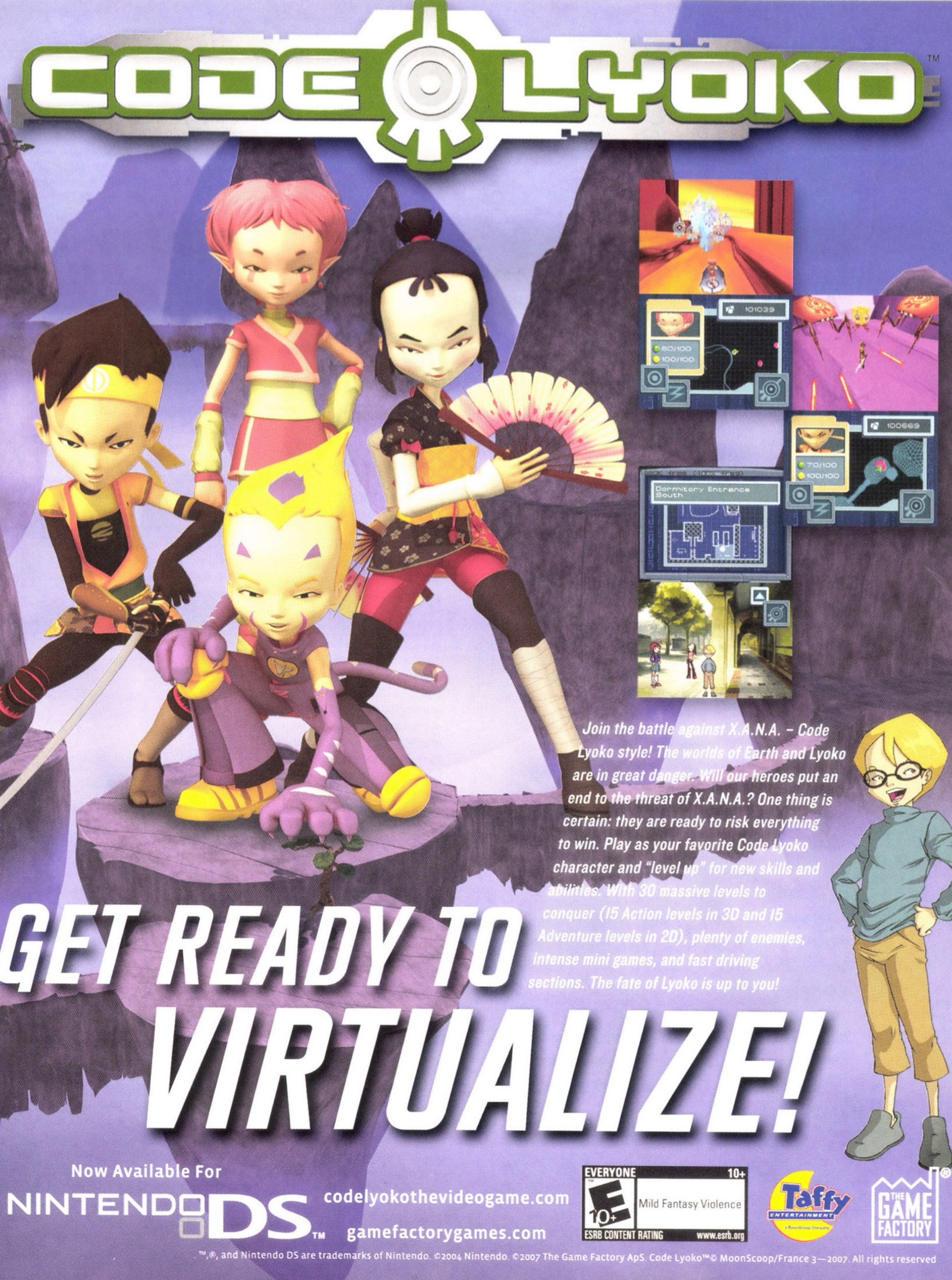
DS = Nintendo DS
GBA = Game Boy Advance
GBC = Game Boy Color
GCN = Nintendo GameCube
VC = Wii Virtual Console
Wii = Wii



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Pulse

Dream Makers

This month's cover is testimony to the strength of great franchises. Following in the decade-old flight path of Sega's NiGHTS into Dreams is Wii exclusive NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams. In our feature story, you'll learn about Sega's plans for the title and get a chance to ogle its brilliant graphics. Our lead news story trumpeting Mario and Sonic competing in a Wii game for Olympic gold would have been unthinkable not-so-many years ago. Now, it's just another reason to celebrate being a gamer! And the return of Tecmo's Ninja Gaiden to a Nintendo console (picture your seemingly benign DS stylus as a ninja weapon of death!) is enough to make a grizzled gaming vet weep—less from nostalgia, truth be told, than from recollecting how painfully difficult the original games were on NES. We also begin a new series profiling the big cheeses of the gaming industry, beginning with the biggest cheese of them all, Shigeru Miyamoto. Talk about strong franchises—Mr. Miyamoto has been the guiding force behind Mario, Zelda, Nintendogs, Pikmin—and now we learn what superpower he craves! Don't miss it. And speaking of franchises, this month we explore the cinematic side of gaming with a screening of summer offerings from Spider-Man 3 to Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End. Also, this is the final issue for one of NP's franchise players, George Sinfield, who will take on a new role as contributing writer beginning next month from new digs in New York City, where he plans to hang out at the Nintendo World store and Shea Stadium. If you're in the Big Apple, look for the lanky guy with untied shoelaces munching Cracker Jacks and playing DS at a Mets game.

Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

THREAT LEVEL HIGH

I'm sure Nintendo Power will get threat letters because of the Power Awards results, but I'm sure you guys are prepared. That said, I'm totally disappointed that Chibi-Robo didn't win a single award! Not even for best new character! Well, at least Elite Beat Agents won something. I can understand Twilight Princess winning game of the year, but I am mad that Dragon Quest Heroes: Rocket Slime won nothing.

DoubleDave4303
via the Internet

WE GOT THE BEAT

Well, I officially love you guys, now. You gave Elite Beat Agents everything it deserved in the NP Awards. That game is so incredible, moving, and heart-pumping that I almost cried with joy on beating it on the second-hardest difficulty (I'm working on the hardest difficulty right now). I'm appalled that most of your readers don't know a masterpiece when they see one. EBA has become one of my favorite games of all time. Again, thanks for giving it so many glowing props.

Mr. A
via the Internet

After reading the NP Awards, I must say I am very frustrated after seeing how many staff pick awards Elite Beat Agents received. Here's the truth: it's not that great of a game. To put it bluntly, EBA is boring; all you do is follow lines and tap circles. It has a pretty good soundtrack, and the animations are engaging, but that's just not enough to make a good game. What irritated me the most is how you gave agents J, Derek, and Morris the award for best new character. If you think that's true, none of you at NP understand what makes a character. It's a lot more than their appearance; award-winning characters are supposed to have personalities, ones that you can work with and develop. Do you honestly think that some dancing agents with Afros fit that description? If you look at how many readers' picks it won, you'll see what I mean. I'll save the time for you: it won none.

Lucas C.
via the Internet

Boring isn't an adjective any of us would use to describe EBA; that's for sure. As for the best new character, do you really not see the potential in dancing, suit-wearing, Afro-picking secret agents? Sounds pretty developable to us.

DON'T HATE THE PLAYER; HATE THE MINIGAME

Why do game developers always feel like they have to put minigames in DS and Wii games? I don't understand how developers can make a great game, and then feel the need to pollute it with unnecessary minigames. It's usually the whole reason that the game is not as successful as it could've been.

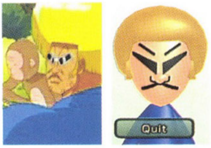
Esler
via the Internet

Jeez, what a weird thing to pick on! Minigames should be viewed as a value-added feature to a game, not as a replacement to features that were taken out.

BOFFO FOR BO-BOBO

I was reading Nintendo Power [Volume 214] and I was interested in the section about how to create certain Miis. On the first page of the article that showed a collage of Miis that I assume you guys made, I swear that I saw Bo-bobo from the anime *Bobobo-bo Bo-bobo*. I never thought the NP staff would be interested in a random anime like this like I am! Was it intentional or unintentional? It looked pretty accurate!

Mewtoo
via the Internet



How can you not love an anime featuring a giant yellow 'fro and magical nose-hairs?

SPITTING IMAGE

Nintendo sure did do a great job on the Mii Channel. My mom says that my Mii looks more like me than I do.

Andrew W.
via the Internet

Gosh, Andrew—we're not sure whether to laugh or cry. Maybe you should spend a little more time with your mother so she can remember what you look like.

MR. VERSATILE

A little while ago I was playing one of my favorite SNES games, Breath of Fire. I've beaten the game countless times, so when it came time for the credits I knew what to expect; every developer would be represented by a certain enemy or boss sprite from the game. As I watched them all go by, one of the lead writer/editors caught my eye: George Sinfield. I knew I'd heard the name before, and I quickly grabbed an issue of NP to confirm the spelling. Yep, there's a George Sinfield working for NP as a writer/editor, as well. Could these two people possibly [be] one and the same? The last name might be a common one, but I would have incredible respect for the man if it were really him. Apparently the mystery man also worked with the old Square branch that made Secret of Evermore, another stunning RPG from that era. Thanks for the time, NP. I've been subscribing to you guys for forever now, and you've never let me down after all these years. Kudos.

RPGRocker
via the Internet

You're absolutely right. George has had the rare opportunity to be both a part of the gaming media and involved in the development of some true classics.

AND HE'S A NICE GUY, TOO!

I noticed in Volume 211 you listed Casey Loe as a contributing writer, and even had his comments in the Writer's Block column. Is this the same Casey Loe that wrote the famous Versus Books players guides for Ocarina of Time and Majora's Mask? If so, why hasn't he been in the magazine before that issue? Those guides were fantastic—the best ones out there. Not only did he make everything easy, but he also made the adventure more fun and humorous. You should definitely make him a permanent part of the NP team, and let him handle all your Zelda guides.

Jeremy S.
via the Internet

Everybody's getting sniffed out this month. We've been fortunate to have Casey working with us on several projects, but for now he remains a freelance writer in high demand.

JUST LOCK THE DOOR, OK?

I would like to thank you for such a great magazine, but I have one request. You see, each new Nintendo Power magazine lives in my bathroom for when I need to use the facilities. The problem is, it's the same bathroom I shower in, and sometimes it gets wet! Can you help me? Maybe make waterproof magazines, or an official Nintendo Power magazine rack!

Jamison S.
via the Internet

Until we hear about an inexpensive method of waterproofing paper, we'll have to file this one under "too much information" and move on.

TURNING JAPANESE

With the Wii Shop Channel and Virtual Console in full swing, and everyone making their VC wish lists, do you think there are any plans for Japanese games to come to the Virtual Console "shelves?" With the popularity of recent installments to some long-standing series such as Gyakuten Saiban (Phoenix Wright), Fushigi no Dungeon (Pokémon Mystery Dungeon), Famicom Wars (Advance Wars), and Fire Emblem (um . . . Fire Emblem), it'd be great if some of those older Japanese games could creep out of the shadows into the VC spotlight. And most American gamers have yet to taste the awesomeness that was Seiken Densetsu 3 (a Japan-only game in the Mana series).

Curtis M.
via the Internet

We've been wondering the same thing. Nintendo is being tight-lipped about the long-term future of VC titles, but the inclusion of games from other markets seems perfectly feasible (to us, at least).

SAVE THOSE PENNIES

If a game gets put onto the Virtual Console that I really want, but I can't afford enough points for it at the time, will Nintendo leave the game on the Virtual Console forever? Or are the games on the Virtual Console for a period of time, then taken off to make room for new ones? I don't want to miss out on any great classic games.

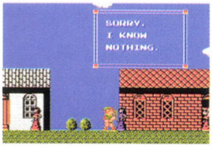
Jason S.
via the Internet

According to what we've heard, once a Virtual Console game gets put on to the Shop Channel, it's there for good.

YOU ARE ERROR

In the Channels column of Volume 212, you mention the first The Legend of Zelda. Then Volume 213's Channels column you refer to The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past as "The third installment in the revered series . . ." So my question is, what is the second installment? And will it be purchasable on the Virtual Console?

Teddy G.
via the Internet

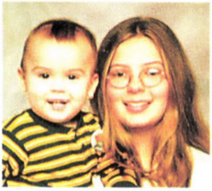


The Legend of Zelda II: Adventure of Link holds a place in many gamers' hearts. Look for it on Virtual Console in April.

HOW COULD A FACE LIKE THAT BE BAD?

I just read Pulse from Volume 215 and thought I should respond to Dustin G's letter about him naming his second-born child Link. Well, video games have always been a big part of my life, with Nintendo games being first on my list. My wife and I were getting ready for the birth of our second child and I was making up names like Chewbacca, Homer, Link, Mario, and then I said Ganon. She said, "Hey I like that!" So now Ganon is 18 months old and so far not an evil king. One more thing: I found out later that when I said Ganon my wife thought I was talking about Rich Gannon, the ex-49ers quarterback. Hey, whatever works! I got my Ganon and that's all that counts.

James H.
via the Internet



Ain't he the cutest little fella! After seeing this Ganon, we take back all that stuff we said about all Ganons being evil.

THIS THING'S AMAZING!

Hey guys, I'm pretty bummed. I lost my DS at my friend's house right before Pokémon Diamond and Pearl, Lunar Knights, and Etrian Odyssey are coming out! I was just wondering if there's a super-duper device that could track down my DS for me and end my gaming anguish? I'm pretty sure there isn't, but I can trust the NP crew to work a miracle for me. Right?

LinkTheGreat
via the Internet

We've been dying to try out this new-fangled DS-Finder. Lessee here . . . according to our readings, your DS should *be at your friend's house.*

Mii: VICE CITY

I got a Wii a couple of weeks ago, and I love it! It's awesome! But I'm really bad at Wii Sports. It's frustrating when you try and try, and those obnoxious pre-made Miis keep beating you with a big smile on their face. I think Nintendo should enlist someone smart to make Wii Stress Reducer, where you can go around a Mii city and beat pre-generated Miis over the head with baseballs, tennis rackets, golf clubs, bowling balls, and of course, boxing gloves (and they wouldn't resist). Suggest it to Nintendo, OK?

Burrito Sr.
via the Internet

Yikes. Stress reducers are a good idea, but we're not sure if beating the tar out of poor little Miis is the right way to do it. Maybe you could just take a walk around the block too cool off instead?

THIS AIN'T EBAY, BUDDY

I'm 15 years old and I have barely a dollar to my name. My mother will not allow me to get any console systems (e.g. Wii, Gamecube), only portable systems. But I still lack the money to buy games such as the new FINAL FANTASY for DS or Children of Mana. However, I am trying to sell a fine Selmer clarinet if anyone's interested.

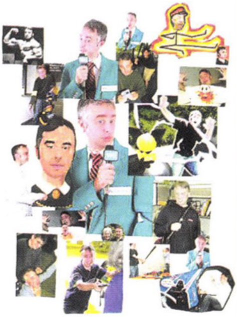
Thisisnotasalespitch
via the Internet

We'd usually advocate selling house and home for video games, but don't hawk your horn just yet. You'll thank us when your friends are playing Crash Bandicoot and you're playing Carnegie Hall.

YES, YOU'RE CRAZY

Here is my collage of Chris Shepperd. I have collected all of these pictures of him over the years, waiting until I had enough to do this. Yes, I do think that he is cool, and no, I'm not crazy.

Justin S.
via the Internet



Chris says: I'm not sure whether to be flattered or to hire a bodyguard. Either way, I appreciate the effort. But after seeing this, I'll make a conscious effort to keep my unsightly mug from appearing in the magazine every dang month.

Hey guys! I'd like to say that I'm disappointed with the Virtual Console's iteration of Kid Icarus. For some reason Nintendo has decided to remove all of the original cheat passwords and save codes! It may sound strange, but these passwords were nostalgic to me (and many other gamers), and I was looking forward to when I downloaded the game. To my severe disappointment, however, none of them work anymore! "KidKid Icarus KidKid Icarus" and "ICARUS FIGHTS MEDUSA ANGELS" have been removed from the game completely! Sure, normal game-generated passwords work, but where's the fun in that? This has me concerned for possible future VC titles such as the original Metroid. Will passwords such as the famous "Justin Bailey" cheat be ripped out of the game? Or what about if they take out the Contra code if the original Contra is released on Virtual Console—a code so ingrained in gaming society that it's been reproduced on T-shirts. I don't know what Nintendo is thinking, but by stripping classic games of their once-renowned passwords, they're tearing apart gaming history.

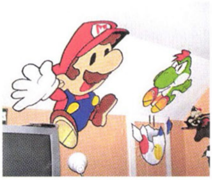
Kado
via the Internet

We totally agree, Kado; codes like that are part of the lore of some games. Unfortunately, it sounds like the saving method has to get tweaked before it can be put on the Virtual Console, making old save codes obsolete. Trick codes like the Contra code should work in future VC titles, however.

PAPER-THIN WALLS

Hey, guys. I thought it would be cool if I showed you some pictures of my awesome bedroom wall that my dad painted. It's of Paper Mario and Yoshi from Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door. He painted it entirely by freehand! He printed a picture of two characters together, then put a grid on top of it. Then he did the same thing on the wall, but obviously a lot bigger. You guys can figure it out from there. Check it out!

Taylor L.
via the Internet



Nice job, Taylor's dad! That's about as authentic as a reproduction gets. Maybe you can stop by and spice up the boring walls around here next.

RAINDROPS KEEP FALLIN'

One time on a rainy day my mom dropped off my brother, Anthony, at the dentist. I left my Nintendo DS Lite leaning against the front door of the car. When my brother opened the door, the DS Lite fell on the parking lot in the rain. I got worried. I picked it up and turned it on. I was surprised when it still worked. This is my question: Is the DS Lite waterproof?

DSPLayer95
via the Internet

While the DS is designed to withstand the elements to some extent, it's certainly not waterproof (or shatterproof). We suggest you invest in one of the brotherproof DS cases that are on the market.

MARIO MAKES THE WORLD GO 'ROUND

I had one of the greatest experiences of my life last week, and it involved the DS. I was alone on a plane going from Atlanta, Georgia to Peoria, Illinois. Since I was alone I was sitting next to a total stranger. He was from India; I don't know if he lives there now but he did have a thick accent, so he must have lived there for a good amount of time. Even though he was a stranger he was really nice and we talked for a little bit until he eventually pulled out a blue DS. This led me to pull out my red DS, and the battle was on. He downloaded my New Super Mario Bros. game and we played Mario vs. Luigi and battled with the minigames. We played DS for the whole flight and had a great time. I even forgot I was on a plane! I just thought it was really cool that two people from different parts of the world could randomly meet and play Nintendo. It was so cool! So thanks, Nintendo, for helping me get through a really boring flight! You rock!

Nicole F.
via the Internet

POSTPONED PARTY

Hey, NP, I have a complaint. You show in the last pages of each issue what will be coming up in next month's issue, but in your March issue [Volume 213], it said, "Wii control makes Mario Party 8 a landmark game in the popular series. Our coverage continues with a focus on multiplayer features." I got my April issue [Volume214] and it said nothing about MP8! You guys said you would continue your coverage, but you didn't even include Mario Party 8 in your game index.

Wiiisbetterthnu
via the Internet

Unfortunately, this stuff happens—we think we're going to land a juicy story, then it falls through at the last minute. When that happens, we're just as disappointed as you are.

CORRECTOR'S CORNER

I'm the one who sent in my Zelda blanket [Community, Volume 214]. Well, you messed up when you were talking about the blanket, saying it was "made by the love of his mother." Well, the thing is, I'm a girl. Girls like to play Zelda games, too, you know. ;)

Taylor W.
via the Internet

In Volume 215's Mii of the Month section, You misspelled the line from The Beatles' "I Am the Walrus." According to Magical Mystery Tour's liner notes, it's Goo goo g'joob, not Coo coo ca choo.

Billy S.
via the Internet

In the article Alien Invasion [Volume 214], is it just me or was Andy Alamano holding a wireless nunchuk?

CRC13
via the Internet

You're not seeing some new technology at work; a little bit of overzealous photo retouching accidentally removed the cord connecting the nunchuk and Wii remote.

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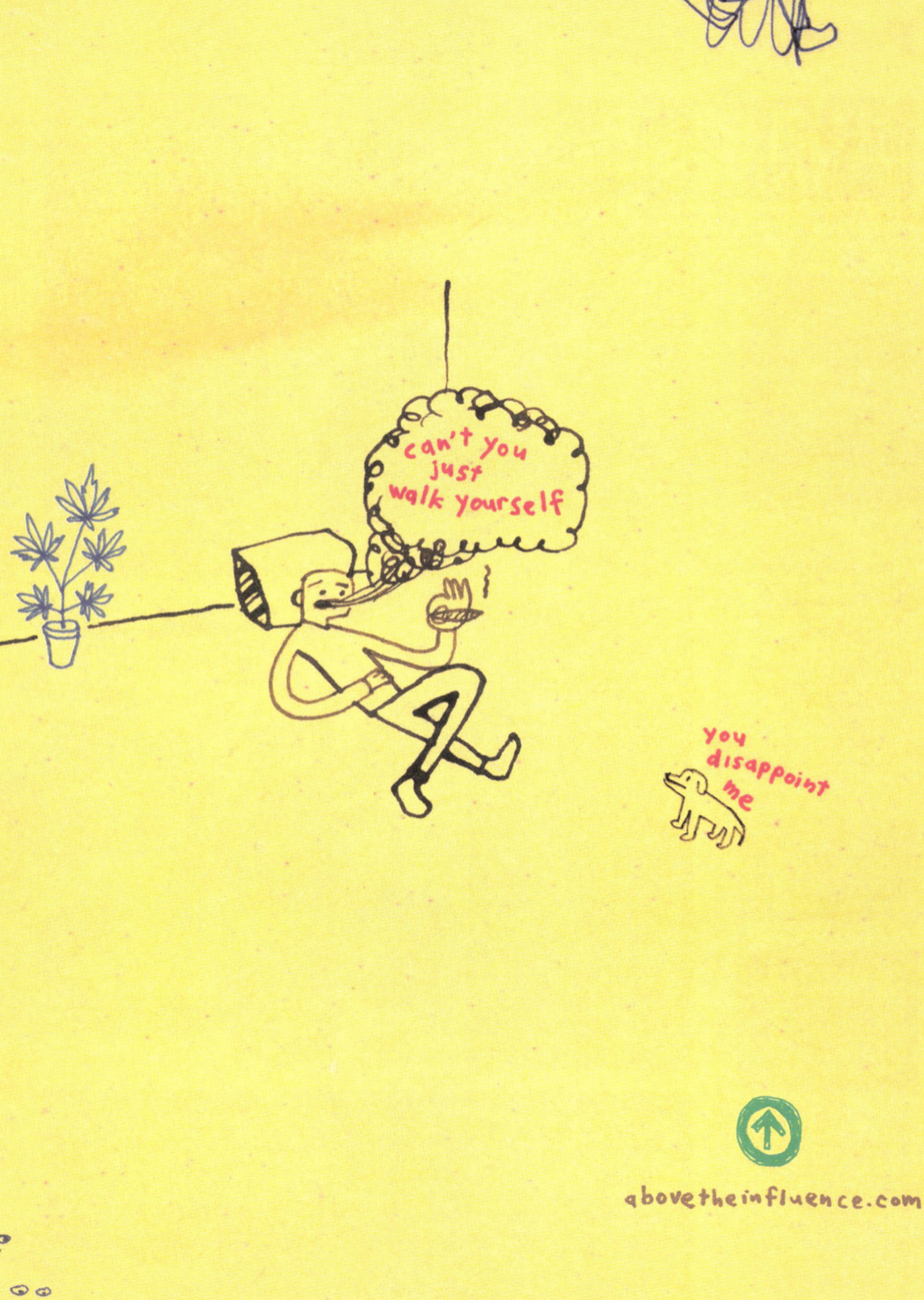
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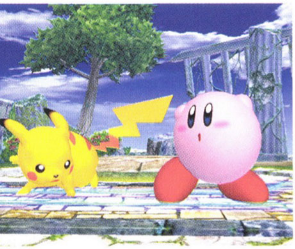
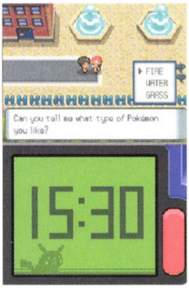


>Wii

1. Super Smash Bros. Brawl
2. Super Mario Galaxy
3. Metroid Prime 3: Corruption
4. Pokémon Battle Revolution
5. Fire Emblem



Can you tell me what type of Pokémon you like?

>NINTENDO DS

1. Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl
2. The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass
3. Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings
4. SimCity DS
5. Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO Wii

It's not the strongets title in the pack, but Wii Play's controller bundle and family-friendly games bumped WarioWare down to third place this month.

1. Wii Play
2. The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
3. WarioWare: Smooth Moves
4. Sonic and the Secret Rings
5. Rayman Raving Rabbids
6. Madden NFL 07
7. Red Steel
8. Call of Duty 3
9. Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz
10. Excite Truck

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO DS

We were ho-hum about Diddy Kong's arrival on the DS, but this month's sales information has made a monkey out of us.

1. Diddy Kong Racing
2. New Super Mario Bros.
3. Mario Kart DS
4. Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day
5. Kirby: Squeak Squad
6. Nintendogs: Dalmatian and Friends
7. Yoshi's Island 2
8. Animal Crossing: Wild World
9. Big Brain Academy
10. Nintendogs: Dachshund and Friends

>VIRTUAL CONSOLE—SNES

We've been wanting to include top Virtual Console games for a while, but there are just so many ways to slice this pie. We've decided to show a different sales chart each month. We kick off with the top Virtual Console games released originally on the Super NES.

1. Super Mario World
2. The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past
3. Street Fighter II: The World Warrior
4. Super Castlevania IV
5. Donkey Kong Country

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.

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HIT THE MATS

Wii GETS ITS GROOVE ON

LOST IN SPACE

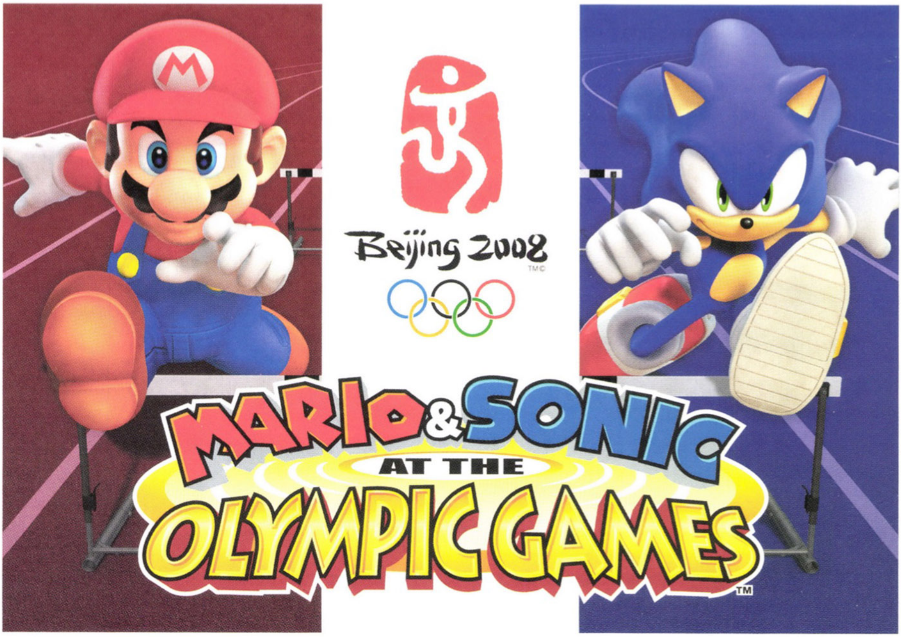
IT'S GETTING COLD IN HADES

Dream Team

It's plumber versus hedgehog as gaming's biggest icons finally go head-to-head in Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games. Bubsy failed the qualifying round.

If you had told us in the early 1990s that Sonic and Mario would one day appear in the same game together, we likely would have found a nice padded room for you to live out the remainder of your hysteria-filled days. But lo and behold, the legendary mascots will co-star in Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games, a historic collobaration headed for the Wii and DS this holiday season. Joining the duo is a sizable cast of friends, including Luigi, Knuckles, Yoshi, and Tails, as they compete in such events as swimming, table tennis, and the 100-meter dash. Though Sega of Japan is handling development duties for both versions of the game, the team is working closely with Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto. "Mario and Sonic have been respectful rivals since the early days of video games," said Miyamoto. "In fact, for a long time they have been discussing the possibility of one day competing against each other. Now that they have been given the perfect opportunity to meet at the Olympic games, we may finally learn who is actually faster: Mario or Sonic."

Commenting on why the Olympics was the right context for this long-awaited crossover, Sega of America's VP of marketing Scott Steinberg added, "The Olympics gives us that spirit of sportsmanship and healthy competition that really allows the fans, who have been clamoring and arguing about who's the best character, to finally settle this 15-year-old score." —Steve T.

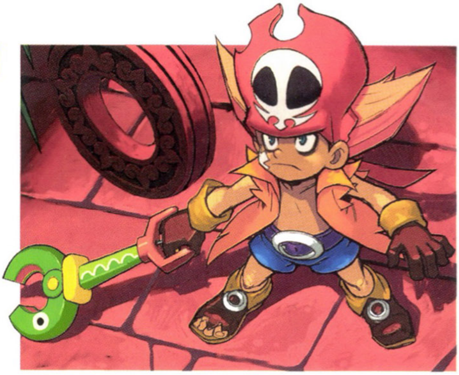


YO HO, YO HO

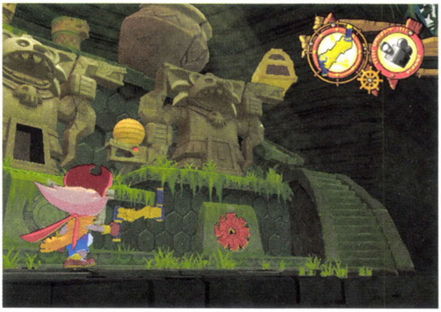
A Pirate's Life

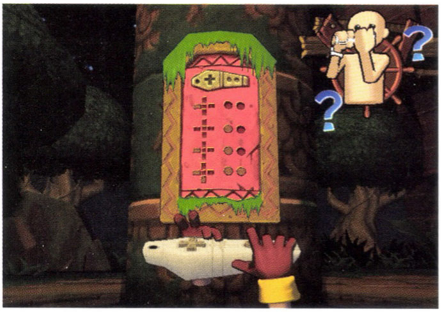
Hidden treasure, talking skulls, and danger abound as Capcom sets sail for Wii.

Avast, matey! If you think the pirate's life—the high-seas, treasure-hunting variety, not the software kind—is for you then Capcom has something that might be right up your galley with Project Treasure Island Z (tentative title). In the game, you control a young, treasure-hunting apprentice named Zack, who stumbles upon a skull while searching for loot. But this is no ordinary skull. In fact, it's the skull of a famous pirate named Barbaros, who stole mountains of treasure from around the world, only to hide it away on a secret island. And if that doesn't sound like an adventure waiting to happen, consider this: The pirate skull of Barbaros talks and makes a deal with Zack. If he can lift Barbaros's curse than the freebooter's skull will give up the key to the island that houses the treasure. In the process, Zack needs to solve all sorts of puzzles while hunting through various environments. The Wii remote serves as your main tool; you'll use it to open doors, grab objects, play musical notes (you'll pretend that the remote is a flute of sorts), and the like. Get ready to swash your buckles and make ready your credit card this fall, ya scurvy dog. —GIANCARLO V



It may not be a pirate hook, but it's much more useful. This wrench is just one of many tools Zack uses to solve puzzles scattered throughout Project Treasure Island Z.



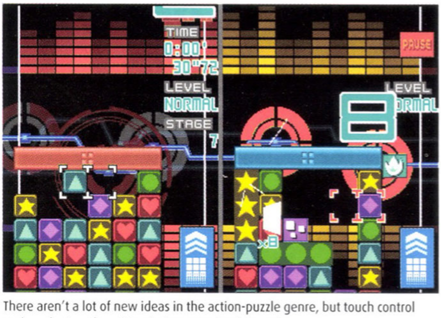


TOUCH AND GO

In a League of Its Own

A puzzle-game classic gets a new life on the DS in the form of Planet Puzzle League to be published by Nintendo in June.

Piece-matching puzzle games never go out of style. The game that was the basis for Tetris Attack and Pokémon Puzzle League will make its DS debut this summer as Planet Puzzle League. The handheld's screens are perfectly situated for the game's vertical nature. You hold the DS as you would a book and manipulate the pieces on the touch screen with your stylus while the other screen shows scoring and time info, or your opponents' progress. The goal is to slide panels on a grid to make matching vertical or horizontal lines of three or more. The longer the line, the bigger the score. In addition to single-player modes that give you short shots of puzzle action with daily goals, the game offers competitive play for up to four gamers locally or globally via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. —GEORGE S.

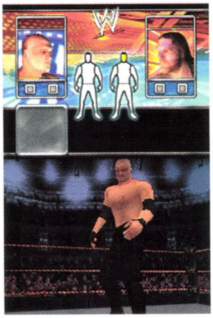


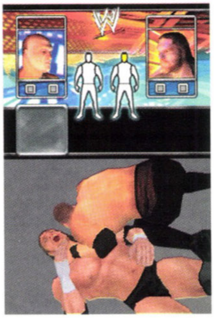
There aren't a lot of new ideas in the action-puzzle genre, but touch control makes playing Planet Puzzle League a fresh experience.

TIME TO PLAY THE GAMES

WWE Double-Teams Wii & DS

Diverse fighting styles and system-specific controls hit the squared circle in WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008.



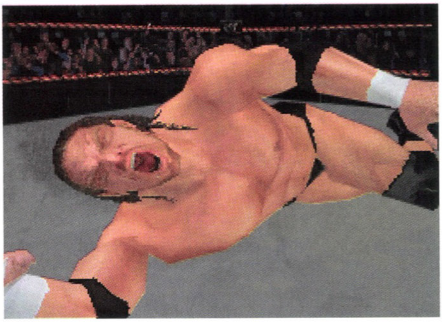


The grapplers of the WWE haven't seen much action on Nintendo systems since 2005's WWE Day of Reckoning 2, but that's going to change this fall when THQ brings their flagship wrestling series to Wii and DS in the form of WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008. Developed by Yuke's, the Wii version of SmackDown vs. Raw builds on the authentic, highly polished grappling of the previous games in the series, but with Wii-exclusive controls, faster gameplay, and other enhancements. Although the details of the controls are still being worked out, according to THQ representatives, the goal is for the wrestlers' animations to match the players' movements—you'll execute a punching motion to punch, for example, and a lifting motion to lift your opponent.

As part of THQ's plan to give players an unprecedented amount of control over their wrestlers, the developers are also revamping their submission system to eliminate the button-mashing play of previous SmackDown vs. Raw games. In its place is the new Struggle Submission System, in which both the attacker and the defender will be able to decide how much power and stamina to use as they try to tighten or break out of holds like the Crippler Crossface or Figure-Four Leglock. Unfortunately, THQ has yet to reveal how the system will be controlled on Wii.

Another new feature is the inclusion of eight fighting styles—each with unique abilities and attributes—that will make characters more like their real-life counterparts. Technical Superstars are balanced characters that can reverse any move by using a stored finishing-move icon; High Flyers rely on their speedy turnbuckle attacks; Powerhouses boast enhanced strength; Brawlers are most proficient with striking moves; Submission Artists are best at escaping and applying holds; Dirty Superstars employ underhanded tactics and can use the referee as a shield; Showmen can feed off of the crowd's positive reaction; and Hardcore Superstars are eager to utilize weapons—perfect for the ECW characters that will be included in the game.

Though the DS version (pictured here) isn't as ambitious as the Wii game, it'll include plenty of wrestling action in its own right. Developed by Amaze, the game features 20 playable characters from all three WWE brands (Raw, SmackDown, and ECW), as well as touch-screen controls that let players use more than 80 different moves. —Chris H.

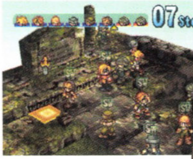


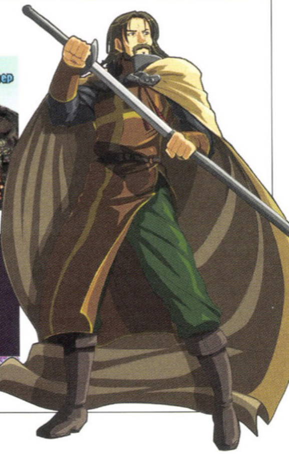
Uh oh, it looks like Hunter tore his quad again.

FANTASY CHESS

Revive and Remix

A forgotten strategy-RPG finds new life on DS in the form of Hoshigami Remix, set for release this summer.





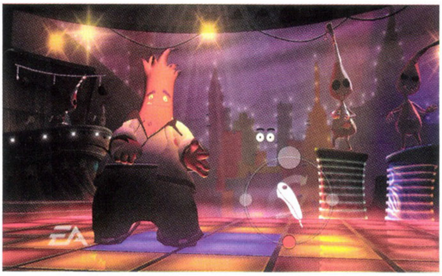
Has anyone else noticed the lack of touch-controlled tactics games on DS? Well, Aksys Games has. The publisher is bringing the obscure PlayStation title Hoshigami: Ruining Blue Earth to DS under the name Hoshigami Remix. The game is a classic strategy-RPG in the vein of FINAL FANTASY Tactics, but with a number of elements that set it apart, such as a unique point-spending system for both moving and fighting. Much of the content from the original is being revamped for the handheld to include a new character, new music, new missions, and a restructured user interface (which will offer optional stylus control). Aksys promises that the DS game will be the definitive version, with more than 50 hours of gameplay, branching story paths, and multiple endings. That's a lot to pack into one tiny game card! —Andy M.

GET DOWN!

EA & Wii Music Factory

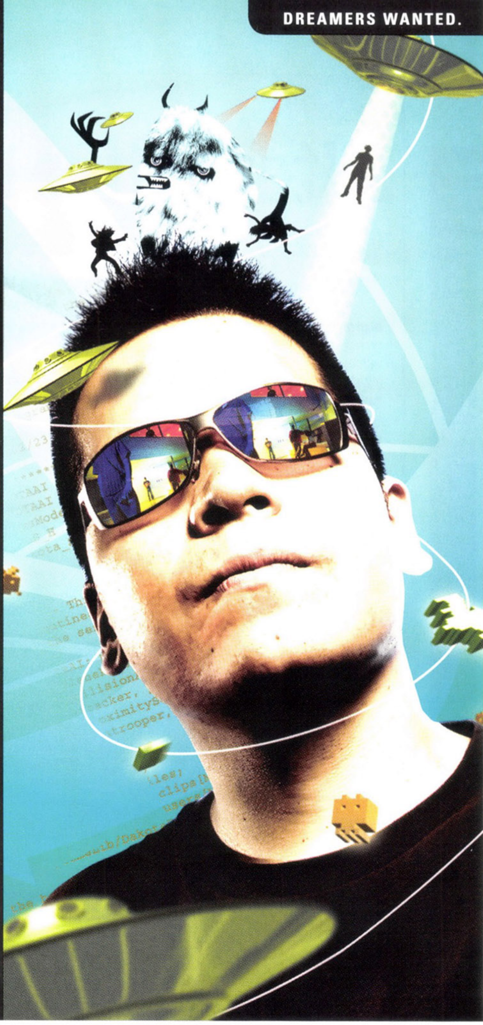
Electronic Arts wants you to groove and move out on the dance floor in Boogie.

It's interesting that one of the first companies to announce a rhythm game for Wii is Electronic Arts. We shouldn't be totally surprised, however. Developers at EA seem inspired by Wii's control scheme, and Boogie is perfect evidence of that. You use both the nunchuk and the Wii remote to perform dance moves in rhythm to the music and icons that appear onscreen. Unfortunately, we don't know to what extent you need to move around or just how crazy the movements get, but we're guessing Boogie will make you want to watch other people play as much as you'll want to play yourself. Plus, the game has a very cool, almost Tim Burton-esque disco look. EA promises that you can customize characters dancing around on the screen and that there are plans to include karaoke, which means that a microphone attachment may be in the offing. In addition, there will be a video editor to embarrass . . . err . . . show off your moves to others. A final track list isn't available yet, but EA representatives say the game will contain a diverse soundtrack of 40 songs, spanning chart-toppers from the 1950s to more-contemporary music. Polish off your dance shoes and put on your finest polyester suit—Boogie's dancing into stores later this year. —Giancarlo V.



We do know that you use the Wii remote and nunchuck to move your dancer around on the screen, but we don't know if there's a hidden John Travolta mode that requires you to stay alive.

DEGREES IN: COMPUTER ANIMATION > DIGITAL ARTS & DESIGN > FILM > GAME DEVELOPMENT > MUSIC BUSINESS > RECORDING ARTS > SHOW PRODUCTION & TOURING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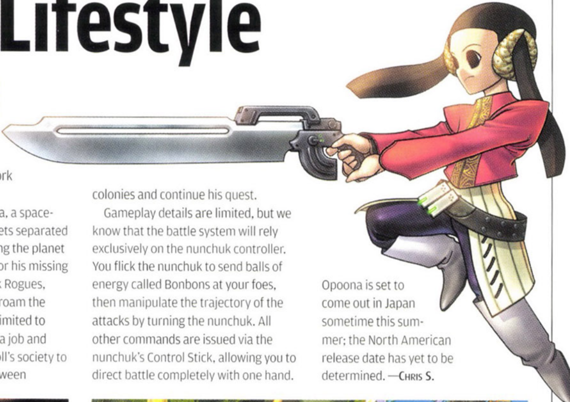
GALAXY QUEST

Alternative Lifestyle

Opoona will learn on the job the skills he needs to find his parents in the new Wii RPG from Koei.

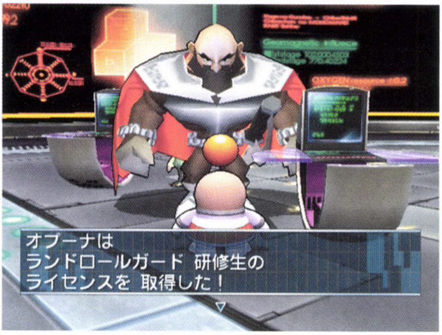


Koei continues to uphold their reputation for publishing unconventional titles with Opoona, a Wii game they're labeling a "Lifestyle RPG." The development studio behind Opoona is Arte Piazza, a company best known for its art design on the Dragon Quest series. Some of the notable people working on the highly stylized RPG include art director Shintaro Majima (a graphic designer for Dragon Quest VII) and composer Hitoshi Sakimoto (who recently received acclaim for his work on FINAL FANTASY XII).

The story follows Opoona, a space-traveling young boy who gets separated from his family while visiting the planet Landroll. He must search for his missing siblings while battling Dark Rogues, mysterious monsters that roam the land. But his duties aren't limited to fighting; Opoona must get a job and establish himself in Landroll's society to earn the right to travel between colonies and continue his quest.

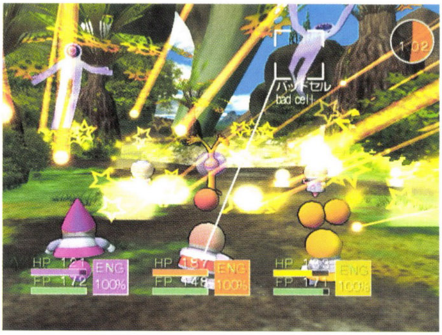
Gameplay details are limited, but we know that the battle system will rely exclusively on the nunchuk controller. You flick the nunchuk to send balls of energy called Bonbons at your foes, then manipulate the trajectory of the attacks by turning the nunchuk. All other commands are issued via the nunchuk's Control Stick, allowing you to direct battle completely with one hand.

Opoona is set to come out in Japan sometime this summer; the North American release date has yet to be determined. —Chris S.



オプーナは
ランドロールガード 研修生の
ライセンスを 取得した！

Once Opoona has met enough folks and worked at his job long enough, he'll earn the right to travel to new places and meet new people.



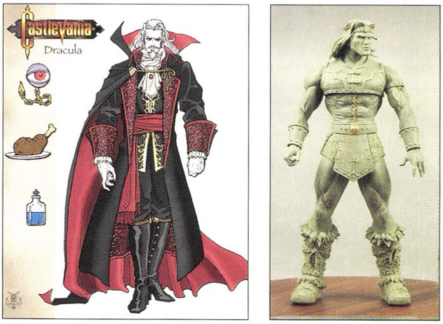
Fighting will be fun for the whole family once Opoona reunites with his siblings Copoona and Poleena.

NICE FIGURE

Whip into Action

Konami's legendary Castlevania franchise is immortalized in action-figure form courtesy of toy manufacturer NECA.

The renowned Castlevania series has thrilled players with its vampire-slaying action in many ways over its 20-year history, and this October—just in time for Halloween—the franchise is delving into new territory: action figures. Created by NECA, the initial series of seven-inch-tall figures will consist of four characters from throughout Castlevania lore: the original vampire hunter, Simon Belmont (based upon his appearance in the original NES box art); the Prince of Darkness, Count Dracula; Dracula's heroic son Alucard; and an evil succubus. (The latter three are modeled after their appearances in Castlevania: Symphony of the Night.) Each figure will feature 16 to 18 points of articulation and carry a suggested price of $12.99. —Chris H.



Left: a concept sketch of Count Dracula. The Peeping Eye, holy water, and roast may be included as accessories. Right: a work-in-progress wax sculpt of Simon Belmont. He's so manly he doesn't need pants.

GAME WATCH FORECAST

Last month we told you to expect some major Wii unveilings, and the new titles revealed in this issue are only the beginning—there are more exciting announcements on the way. Stay tuned.

Announced
In Development
Ready for Release

Game Title — Publisher ●●●
Game Title — Publisher ●●● —New games added to the list

Wii

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
Agatha Christie: And Then There Were None	The Adventure Company	●●○
Alien Syndrome	Sega	●●○
Battalion Wars 2	Nintendo	●●○
Big Brain Academy	Nintendo	●●○
The Bigs	2K Sports	●●○
Bionicle Heroes	Eidos	●●●
Blitz: The League	Midway	●●○
Boogie	Electronic Arts	●●○
Brothers in Arms: Double Time*	Ubisoft	●●○
Brunswick Pro Bowling	Crave	●●○
Bust-a-Move Bash!	Majesco	●●○
Code Lyoko	American Game Factory	●○○
Cooking Mama: Cook Off	Majesco	●●●
Dance Dance Revolution Hottest Party	Konami	●●○
Dave Mirra BMX Challenge	Crave	●●○
Destiny of Zorro	TBD	●●○
Dewy's Adventure*	Konami	●●○
Disaster: Day of Crisis	Nintendo	●●○
Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors	Square Enix	●●○
Driver: Parallel Lines	Ubisoft	●●○
Emergency Mayhem	Codemasters	●●○
Escape from Bug Island	Eidos	●●○
Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer	2K Games	●●○
Ferrari Challenge	System 3	●○○
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Crystal Bearers	Square Enix	●●○
Fire Emblem*	Nintendo	●●○
The Godfather: Blackhand Edition	Electronic Arts	●●●
Godzilla: Unleashed	Atari	●●○
The Golden Compass	Sega	●○○
Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix	Electronic Arts	●●○
Harvest Moon Wii*	Natsume	●●○
Legend of the Dragon	American Game Factory	●●●
LEGO Batman: The Videogame	Warner Bros. Interactive	●○○
Line Rider	inXile	●○○
Looney Tunes: Acme Arsenal	Warner Bros. Interactive	●●○
Manhunt 2	Rockstar	●○○
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games	Sega	●●○
Mario Party 8	Nintendo	●●○
Mario Strikers: Charged	Nintendo	●●○
Medal of Honor: Vanguard	Electronic Arts	●●●
Mercury Meltdown Revolution	Ignition	●●●
Metroid Prime 3: Corruption	Nintendo	●●○
Mortal Kombat: Armageddon	Midway	●●○
Naruto: Clash of Ninja Wii*	D3PA/Tomy	●●○
NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams	Sega	●●○
One Piece: Unlimited Adventure	Namco Bandai	●●○
Opoona	Koei	●●○
Pinball Hall of Fame: The Williams Collection	Crave	●●○
Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End	Disney Interactive	●●○
Pokémon Battle Revolution	Nintendo	●●○
Project H.A.M.M.E.R.	Nintendo	●●○
Project Treasure Island Z*	Capcom	●●○
Ratatouille	THQ	●●○
Resident Evil 4	Capcom	●●○
Resident Evil: Umbrella Cronicles	Capcom	●●○
Samurai Slash*	Koei	●●○
Shrek the Third	Activision	●●○
Space Station Tycoon	Namco Bandai	●●○
Spider-Man 3	Activision	●●○
Super Mario Galaxy	Nintendo	●●○
Super Paper Mario	Nintendo	●●●
Super Smash Bros. Brawl	Nintendo	●●○
Surf's Up	Ubisoft	●●○
Tamagotchi: Party On!	Namco Bandai	●●○
Transformers: The Game	Activision	●●○
World Championship Poker: All In	Crave	●●○
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008	THQ	●●○

NINTENDO DS

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
Biker Mice from Mars	American Game Factory	●○○
Bratz Ponyz	American Game Factory	●●○
Brothers in Arms DS	Ubisoft	●●○
Build a Bear	American Game Factory	●●○
Cake Mania	Majesco	●●○
California Games	System 3	●●○
Cameltry	TBA	●●○
Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol	Nintendo	●●○
Chronos Twin	Lexicon	●●○
Code Lyoko	American Game Factory	●●●
Cookie & Cream	Agetec	●●○
Death, Jr. and the Science Fair of Doom	Konami	●●○
Diner Dash	Eidos	●●○
DK King of Swing DS*	Nintendo	●●○
Dragon Ball Z: Harukanaru Densetsu	Atari	●●○
Dragon Quest IX*	Square Enix	●●○
Drake & Josh	THQ	●○○
DS Air*	Nintendo	●●○
Dynasty Warriors*	Koei	●●○
Etrian Odyssey	Atlus	●●○
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer	2K Games	●●○
Ferrari Challenge	System 3	●○○
Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy Fables: Chocobo Tales	Square Enix	●●●
Flipper Critters	Ignition	●●○
The Golden Compass	Sega	●○○
GoPets	Konami	●●○
Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix	Electronic Arts	●●○
Heroes of Mana	Square Enix	●●○
Hoshigami Remix	Aksys	●●○
Impossible Mission	System 3	●●○
Indiana Jones 2007*	LucasArts	●○○
Legend of the River King*	Natsume	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass	Nintendo	●●○
Line Rider	inXile	●○○
Looney Tunes: Duck Amuck	Warner Bros. Interactive	●●○
Luminous Arc	Atlus	●●○
M&M's Break 'Em	Destination	●●○
Major League Baseball 2K7	2K Sports	●●●
Mega Man Star Force	Capcom	●●○
Nanostray 2	TBD	●●○
Naruto: Ninja Council 3	D3PA	●●○
New York Times Crosswords	Majesco	●●○
Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword	Tecmo	●●○
Panzer Tactics DS*	CDV Software	●●○
Paws & Claws: Pet Vet	THQ	●●○
Pet Alien	American Game Factory	●●○
Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End	Disney Interactive	●●○
Planet Puzzle League	Nintendo	●●○
Pokémon Diamond	Nintendo	●●●
Pokémon Pearl	Nintendo	●●●
Pony Friends	Eidos	●●○
Purr Pals	Crave	●●●
Puzzle de Harvest Moon	Natsume	●●○
Ratatouille	THQ	●●○
Rune Factory: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	Natsume	●●○
The Settlers	Ubisoft	●●●
Shrek Smash and Crash Racing	Activision	●●○
Shrek the Third	Activision	●●○
SimCity DS	Electronic Arts	●●○
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	LucasArts	●○○
Surf's Up	Ubisoft	●●○
Tank Beat	O3	●●○
Time Ace	Konami	●●●
Toon-Doku	Majesco	●●○
Touch the Dead	Eidos	●●○
Touchmaster	Midway	●●○
Transformers: The Game	Activision	●●○
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Undercover: Dual Motives	Anaconda	●○○
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008	THQ	●●○
Zendoku	Eidos	●●○
Zoey 101	THQ	●○○

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
Backyard Baseball 2007	Atari	●●●
Backyard Football 2007	Atari	●○○
Foodfight!	Global Star	●●○
Mini-Golf Mayhem	Crave	●○○
Ratatouille	THQ	●●○
TMNT	Ubisoft	●●●
World Championship Poker	Crave	●●○

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
Family Feud	Global Star	●●○
Foodfight!	Global Star	●●○
Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix	Electronic Arts	●●○
Hot Wheels: All Out	Destination	●●○
Hugo: Bukkazoom	Namco Bandai	●●○
Little Einsteins	Disney Interactive	●●○
Metal Slug	SNK	●●○
Petz Vet	Ubisoft	●●○
Pirate Battle	Orbital	●●○
Ratatouille	THQ	●●○
Shrek the Third	Activision	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Puzzle Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Table Games	Telegames	●●○
Xyanide	Playlogic	●○○

* Tentative title

NEWS BYTES

Daffy Duck Runs Amuck

Use your stylus to drive the duck looney on DS.

Coinciding with Warner Bros. Interactive's upcoming Looney Tunes game for Wii, the publisher is bringing Looney Tunes: Duck Amuck to DS this fall. Based on a 1953 cartoon, the game is packed with fast-paced stylus-driven minigames in which you try to drive Daffy Duck stark raving mad.

Resident Evil 4 Redux

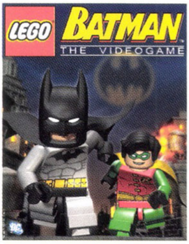
The survival-horror masterpiece takes up residence on Wii.

Capcom has revealed that Resident Evil 4 will come to Wii later this year. Though details were scarce at press time, we're hoping for a new Wii-specific control scheme, as well as all of the extra content that was added to the PlayStation 2 version.

Holy LEGOs, Batman!

The Dark Knight has never looked so adorable.

Coming in 2008 for "all next-generation and current-generation platforms" is LEGO Batman: The Videogame from Warner Bros. Interactive and developer Travellers' Tales (the studio responsible for LEGO *Star Wars*).



SUPER SMASH BROS. Brawl

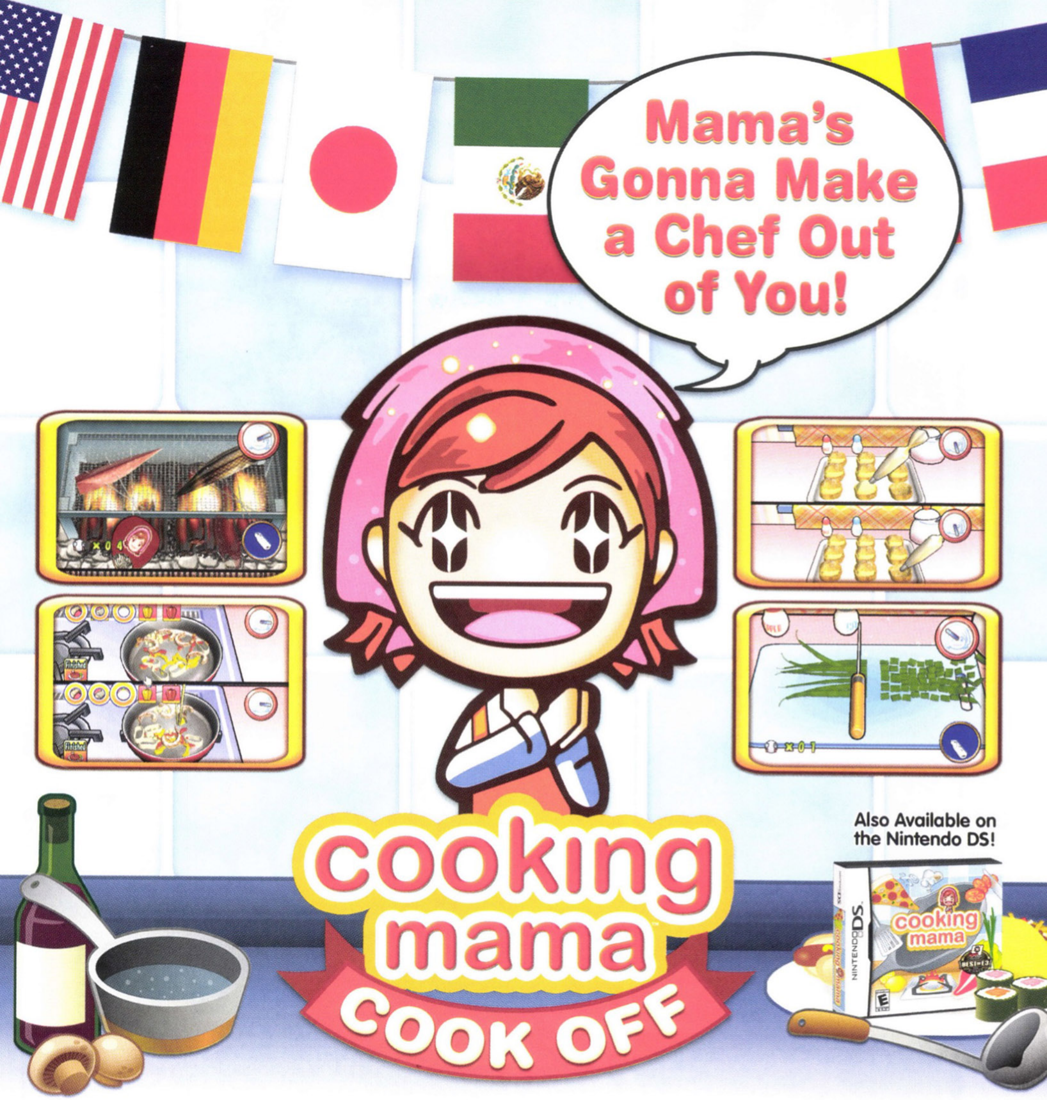
Wii SMASH FILES #11

ZERO SUIT SAMUS

FIRST GAME APPEARANCE:
Samus Aran: Metroid - NES (1987)
In Zero Suit: Metroid: Zero Mission - Game Boy Advance (2004)

KNOWN FOR:
Resourcefulness, dexterity, skin-tight clothing

BIOGRAPHY:
Although galactic bounty hunter Samus Aran is most recognizable in her red-and-yellow Power Suit, in one of her earliest missions her ship was shot down following a harrowing escape from planet Zebes, and her armor was destroyed. As Samus continued her battle against the Space Pirates, she stealthily infiltrated her foes' mothership and proved that she had the ability to come out on top, even without raw firepower. In Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Samus will shed her Power Suit and reveal her Zero Suit form under certain conditions. If her opponents think that leaves her vulnerable, she's prepared to prove them wrong with her enhanced speed and transfigurable pistol.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cooking mama
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Wii

TAITO

MAJESCO ENTERTAINMENT

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Updates on some of gaming's biggest hits: Mario, Zelda, Pokémon, and more!

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Brothers in Arms DS Pg. 32
Cookie & Cream Pg. 30
Etrian Odyssey Pg. 31
Fire Emblem Pg. 27
Impossible Mission Pg. 33
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Worms: Open Warfare 2 Pg. 32

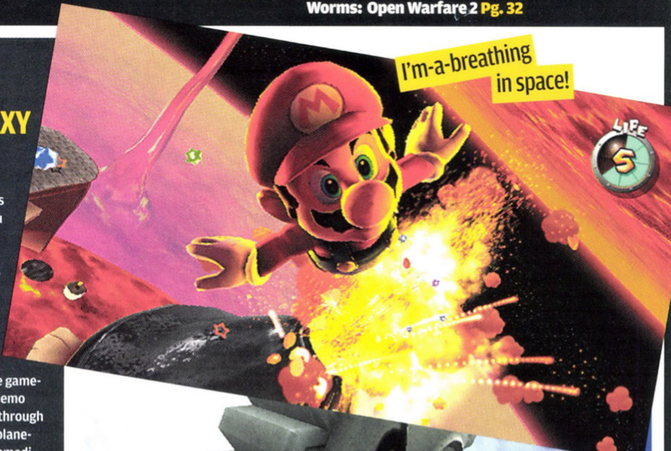
Super Star

> SUPER MARIO GALAXY

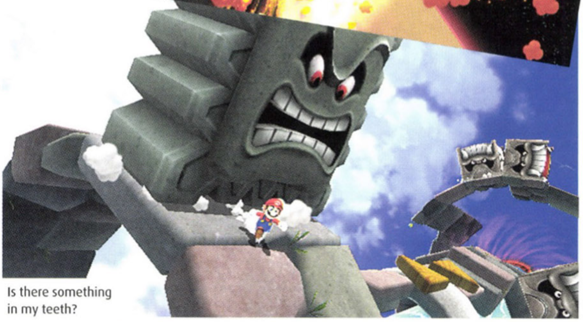
PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: Nintendo • RELEASE: 2007

Houston, we have confirmation. Mario is scheduled for takeoff in 2007. In case you haven't heard, Shigeru Miyamoto reaffirmed at the Game Developers Conference in March that we'd all be able to play Super Mario Galaxy on Wii in 2007. To accentuate this glorious proclamation, a trailer featuring Mario's celestial exploits revealed new enemies and a few new areas. However, the video seems to show that many of the gameplay mechanics from 2006's original E3 demo appear unchanged. Mario still navigates through the cosmos while stopping at a series of planetoids, each mimicking traditional—and immediately recognizable—environments from the Mario universe. Of course, there are some familiar foes returning as well, including a massive Petey Piranha and the menacing Thwomps.

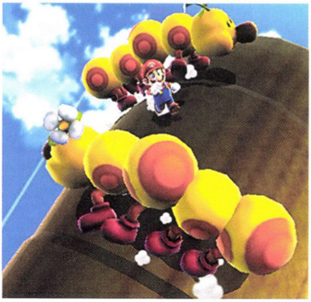
But despite some familiarity, Super Mario Galaxy appears focused on taking Mario outside the norm. One portion of the video shows our hero running around an apple—a space apple, mind you—before stumbling upon what looks like a cork. After a quick stomp from Mario, a worm comes flying out of the apple, forming a bridge that leads to a new apple and allows Mario to continue his journey. Another scene shows Mario navigating through a series of platforms encased in a transparent pill-shaped planetoid. It all looks completely awesome and serves as a testament to the amazing creativity and technical know-how of the brains working at Nintendo's Tokyo studio.
—Giancarlo V.

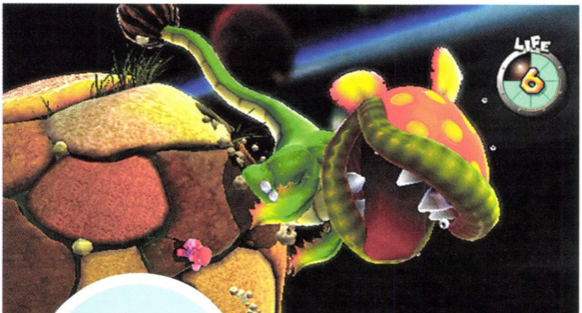


I'm-a-breathing in space!



Is there something in my teeth?





Piranha Plants never looked so good.

All Fired Up

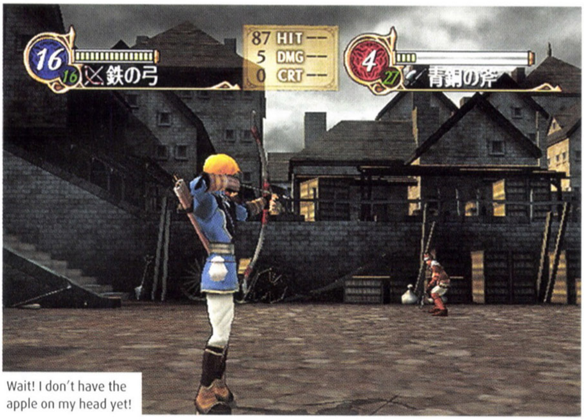
>FIRE EMBLEM

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **Nintendo**
DEVELOPER: **Intelligent Systems** • RELEASE: **TBD**

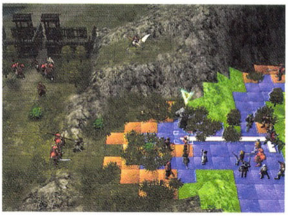
Wii didn't start the fire, but it is most certainly going to intensify it. Fire Emblem for Wii (working title—the game has not been announced for North American release as of yet) picks up where the GameCube strategy-RPG masterpiece, Path of Radiance, left off, returning players to the war-torn continent of Tellius to complete the saga of Ike and company. Don't expect more of the same—the Wii epic takes place a full three years after PoR, in which time Tellius and its inhabitants have changed dramatically. It also introduces a new central character: Macaiah, a mysterious girl with strange powers.

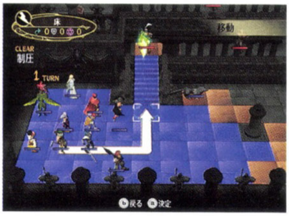
The game begins on the far side of Tellius, in the country of Daein. Macaiah and her childhood friend Sothe (a minor character from PoR) are part of a Robin Hood-style resistance movement called the Dawn Brigade, on a quest to find the rumored son of Daein's felled king. The troop's journey is part one of a massive, four-part saga that greatly exceeds the scope of any previous Fire Emblem title. Each part shows the story from a different angle, and intermittently brings in grown-up versions of characters from the original as they explore never-before-seen parts of Tellius. Compared to its predecessor, Fire Emblem for Wii has more of everything—more chapters, more characters, more cut-scenes, more spells, more weapons, more classes. It's a bigger, better Fire Emblem than ever before. Even if you haven't played PoR, the Wii game looks to be a good entry point for the series; much effort seems to have gone toward crafting a story that can stand on its own.

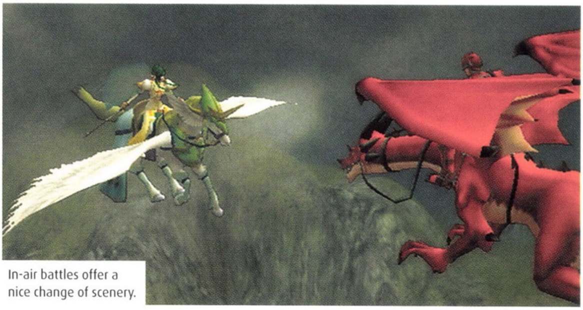
Our hands-on time with the Japanese version revealed that the game looks and plays almost exactly like the GameCube game. You're given multiple controller options (including configurations that allow you to use the classic controller or the GameCube controller), but all revolve around the familiar control scheme from PoR. Fans hoping that the game would utilize motion control might be bummed, but don't despair—judging by what we've experienced, Fire Emblem for Wii will not disappoint. —Andy M.



Wait! I don't have the apple on my head yet!







In-air battles offer a nice change of scenery.

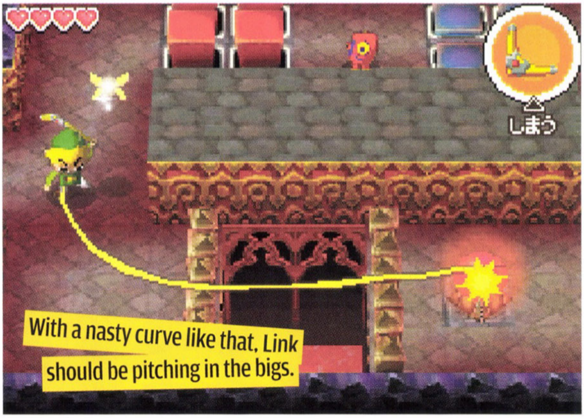
Opposing Forces

>THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: PHANTOM HOURGLASS

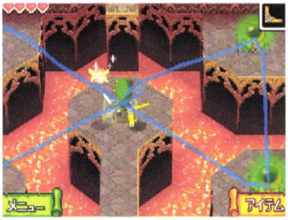
PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO** • RELEASE: **2007**

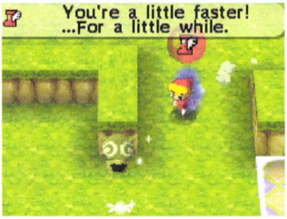
We first told you about Phantom Hourglass's dynamic two-player battle mode way back in our July 2006 cover story, but having played an updated version at this year's Game Developers Conference, it seemed like a good time for a refresher (that and we have these sweet new screenshots to show you). Here's how it works: the player on "offense" controls Link (by dragging the stylus across the touch screen) in an effort to snag as many Force Gems as possible and bring them back to his base, while the player on "defense" tries to stop Link by commanding three phantom guards. The top screen displays a map for the offensive player, but it shows the location of the phantom guards only when Link is carrying a Force Gem. Unfortunately for our tunic-wearing hero, lugging around one of the precious stones slows him down considerably, and if a phantom guard catches up with him, the turn ends and the players switch sides (Link can't attack the guards). Bigger gems are worth more points, but they're also heavier, of course. On defense, the map is on the touch screen, and you guide the phantom guards by drawing paths for them. The defender can see where Link is on the map at all times, unless the hero takes refuge in a safe zone (which the guards are unable to enter). If Link picks up a Force Gem while in the safe zone, however, he'll give away his position.

To make things a bit more interesting, both players can also find power-ups scattered throughout the area. Grabbing them gives Link or the guards a temporary speed boost, allows Link to take a hit without ending the turn, or activates traps that block Link's path with powerful gusts of wind. At the end of a set number of turns, whichever player collected the most Force Gems is the winner. The demo was an absolute blast, combining strategic planning with frantic cat-and-mouse-style action to great effect. Sadly, the single-player adventure wasn't playable at the conference, but it did make an appearance in the form of a new trailer, which you can check out at nintendo.com. —**STEVE T.**

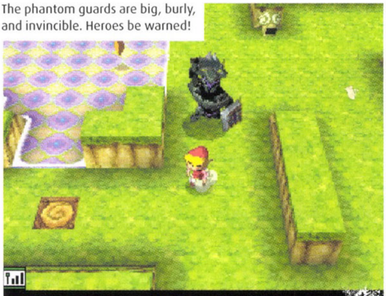


With a nasty curve like that, Link should be pitching in the bigs.

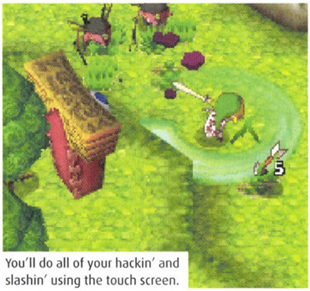




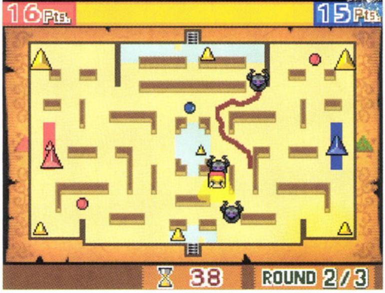
You're a little faster!
...For a little while.



The phantom guards are big, burly, and invincible. Heroes be warned!



You'll do all of your hackin' and slashin' using the touch screen.



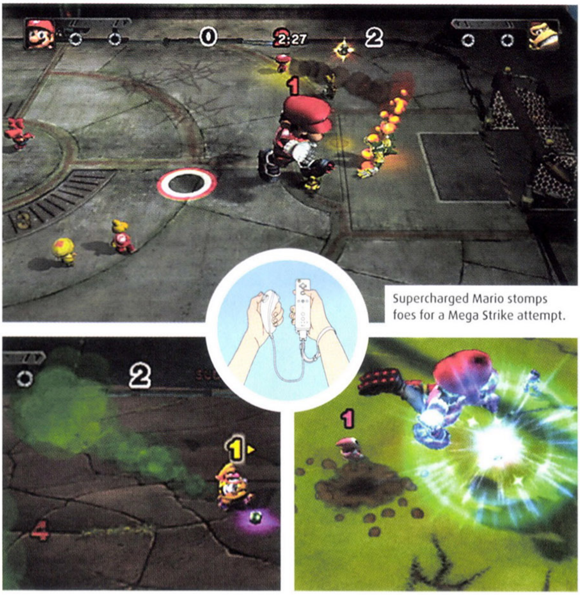
Wii Strikes Wi-Fi Gold

>MARIO STRIKERS CHARGED

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NEXT LEVEL GAMES** • RELEASE: **2007**

When Mario and his ilk lace up their cleats and take to the pitch again in Mario Strikers Charged, you'll face some stiff competition—the rest of North and South America. The sequel to Super Mario Strikers will be the second Wii game—after Pokémon Battle Revolution—to feature Wi-Fi gameplay, and an international mob will be trying to kick and scratch their way up the leader board.

If you're a newbie to Wi-Fi gaming, Charged makes a very good case for jumping on the bandwagon. It's prettier, faster, and more intense than its GameCube predecessor, plus it features a pile of innovations that will entice you to keep blasting shots at the Kritter keepers. The new Mega Strike shot allows you to fire up to six balls at the goal, but it also gives your opponent the chance to block each shot by pointing the Wii remote at the screen. You'll use the Wii remote's motion sensors to unleash devastating big hits, as well. —DREW W.



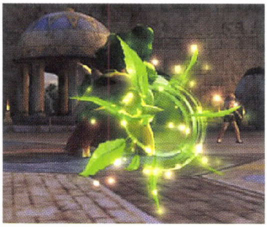
Supercharged Mario stomps foes for a Mega Strike attempt.

A New Wii Revolution

>POKéMON BATTLE REVOLUTION

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **GENIUS SONORITY** • RELEASE: **JUNE 2007**

We've heard a little bit about how Pokémon Battle Revolution works with Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl already, but new details are emerging that are pretty intriguing. Pokémon Battle Revolution's main mode is called Colosseum Battle, and it lets you import your Pokémon from the DS games to challenge all kinds of CPU-controlled Trainers. The battle rules depend on which venue you choose to compete in; for example, if you head to the Waterfall Colosseum, you'll face a string of Team Battles. Not all of the Colosseum Battle contests require the use of your own Pokémon, however—if you fight in the Sunset Colosseum, you'll compete in Select Battles in which you build a party from 12 random Pokémon. Your performances in the Colosseum Battle mode are recorded on a Battle Pass, a card that you can customize in various ways. And for players who don't have Pokémon Diamond or Pokémon Pearl yet, it's possible to use a Rental Pass to "borrow" Pokémon for competition in the Colosseums. We'll have a lot more coverage on the Wii's first Wi-Fi-enabled title next month leading up to its June release. —CHRIS S.



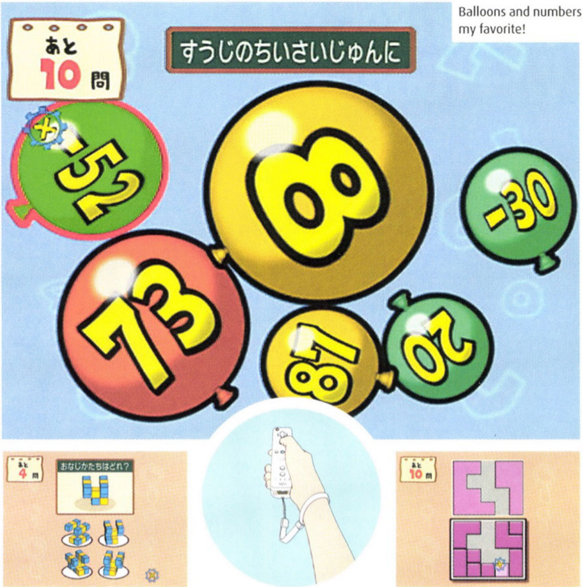
Empoleon's Surf hits Torterra and Infernape simultaneously.

Making the Grade

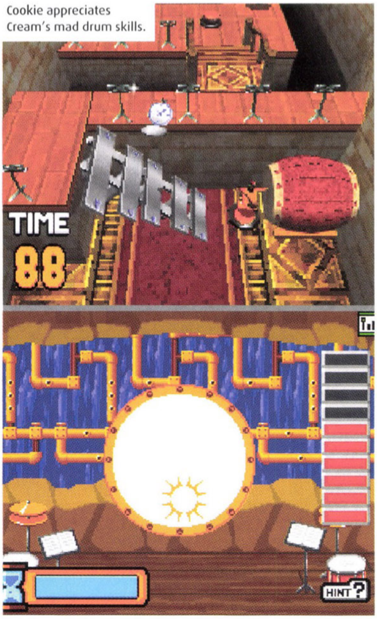
>BIG BRAIN ACADEMY

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **Nintendo**
DEVELOPER: **Nintendo** • RELEASE: **June 2007**

Remember how good it felt when you got a gold star for doing well in school? Playing Big Brain Academy for Wii is kind of like that, only so much more rewarding. The beauty of Big Brain Academy is that it tests several different parts of your brain, ranging from memorization to your ability to crunch numbers within seconds—many of the activities are made specifically for the Wii. And much like in the DS version, you're awarded a bronze, silver, gold, or platinum medal depending on how many correct answers you provide and how quickly you do so—your brain's girth is also measured. Fortunately, there are more multiplayer options and opportunities to compete with other big brains in the Wii version. There's a split-screen mode for when you want to play Big Brain Academy with people in the immediate area, and thanks to WiiConnect24, data from other players around the world can be inputted into the game via Miis, so you should never have a shortage of competing brains. —GIANCARLO V.



Balloons and numbers, my favorite!



Cookie appreciates Cream's mad drum skills.

TIME
86
HINT?

TIME
72
HINT?

Fun with Bunnies

>COOKIE & CREAM

PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **Agetec**
DEVELOPER: **FromSoftware** • RELEASE: **Spring 2007**

We've been hearing about the crazy simultaneous control scheme of Cookie & Cream for a while, but it honestly didn't make sense until we got it in our hot little paws. Controlling both of the eponymous bunnies at the same time doesn't require you to have more than two hands, but you'll wish you had more than one brain to keep track of the hare pair. You move Cookie around on the top screen via the Control Pad (or the A, B, X, and Y Buttons if you're a lefty), and jump using either shoulder button. As he makes his way up through the 3-D stages, he'll encounter floor pads that trigger real-time minigames for Cream to solve on the touch screen. The puzzles aren't particularly difficult—sometimes all you need to do is turn a virtual knob or blow into the microphone. The challenge comes in completing a puzzle when Cookie is in the right place at the right time; sometimes you need to move Cookie while Cream is solving a puzzle. A co-op mode lets you split the duties between two players, providing some much-needed mental relief. Look for the hare-brained fun to hop onto DS this spring. —CHRIS S.

Map Quest

>ETRIAN ODYSSEY

PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **ATLUS**
DEVELOPER: **ATLUS** • RELEASE: **MAY 2007**

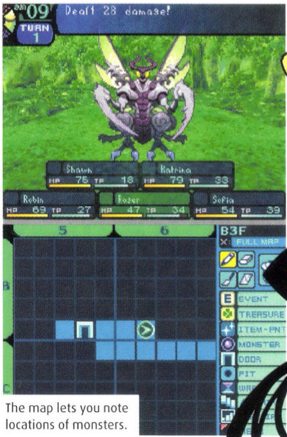
You guys got the hang of navigating the Labyrinth yet?

The Yggdrasil Labyrinth, beneath the town of Etria, has defeated all who have challenged it. Many go in, some come out, but none can claim to have explored the entire underground forest. Which is, of course, where you come in. As a fledgling adventurer and newcomer to Etria, it's your duty to heed the government's call to investigate the mysterious maze, but how you do so is completely up to you.

In many ways, Etrian Odyssey is a throwback to ye olden days of RPGs, in which every critical choice is left to the player. Not only do you get to name your own guild and create your character from scratch, but you get to customize the remainder of your party as well. Will you choose a balanced Landsknecht warrior, a bow-wielding Survivalist, a magicianlike Alchemist, or one of the other six classes? The choice is yours, along with each character's name, gender, and portrait. Once you've assembled a party of five (or fewer, though it's not recommended), you can arrange the group's formation (physical fighters like Protectors are best in the front; characters that rely on skills, such as Medics and Troubadours, are better in back) and select which abilities your characters learn as they acquire skill points. Every character class has a unique branching skill set—there are more than 150 skills in all—and how your party evolves is completely in your hands.

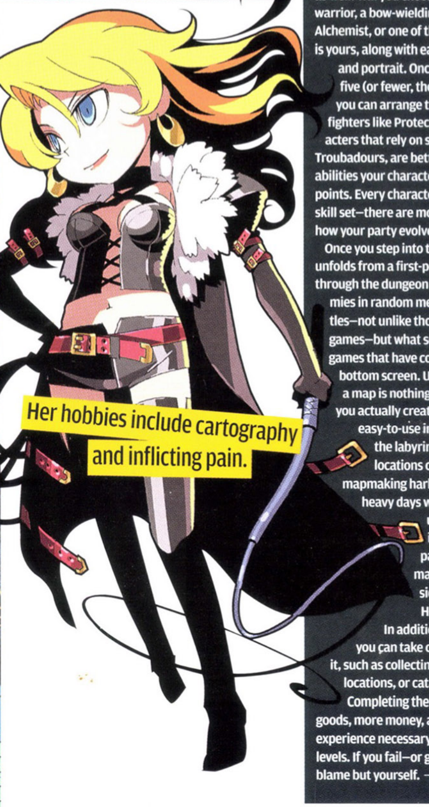
Once you step into the labyrinth, the gameplay unfolds from a first-person perspective. As you crawl through the dungeon you'll square off against enemies in random menu-driven, turn-based battles—not unlike those in the early Dragon Quest games—but what separates Etrian Odyssey from games that have come before is the map on the bottom screen. Using the DS's second screen for a map is nothing new; in Etrian's case, however, you actually create the map yourself with an easy-to-use interface, right down to drawing the labyrinth walls, floors, stairways, and locations of monsters and treasures. The mapmaking harkens back to the exploration-heavy days when in-game maps were unheard of, and it also factors into the plot, such as when your party is tasked with making maps of labyrinth floors. Ever considered being a cartographer? Here's your chance.

In addition to mapping the dungeon, you can take on various assignments within it, such as collecting sundries, visiting specific locations, or cataloging certain monsters. Completing the tasks rewards you with new goods, more money, and, most importantly, the experience necessary to get to the labyrinth's deeper levels. If you fail—or get lost—you've got no one to blame but yourself. —CHRIS H.

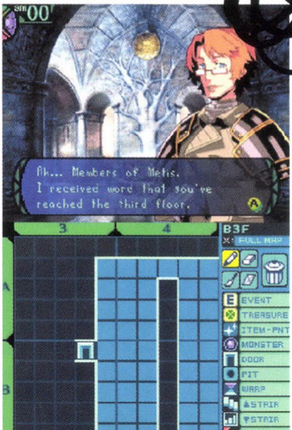


Dealt 28 damage!

The map lets you note locations of monsters.



Her hobbies include cartography and inflicting pain.



Ah... Members of Metis.
I received word that you've reached the third floor.

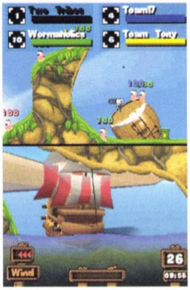
Worldwide Worms

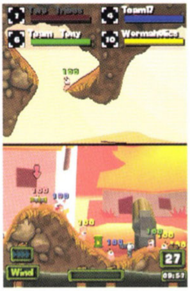
>WORMS: OPEN WARFARE 2

Never trust a worm with a moustache.

PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **TEAM17** • RELEASE: **SUMMER 2007**

They're pink, slimy, and heavily armed—they're the worms of Worms, and they're headed back to DS in what might be their most robust turn-based strategy game yet. As usual, the aggressive annelids have several new weapons in their arsenal, including boomerangs, bunker-buster bombs, sentry guns, and armament-repelling magnets. Additionally, the game features enhancements like a dual-screen playfield, randomly generated gravity and friction effects, and less-predictable AI. As Worms fans know, however, the series is all about the multiplayer experience, which should be elevated to new heights over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. While you're climbing the rankings in matches for up to four players from around the globe, you can show off your creativity with custom levels, team flags, victory speeches, and even tombstones. The game also includes three DS-exclusive minigames that take advantage of the system's touch screen and mic. —CHRIS H.


Two Tribes
Team17
Wormaholics
Team Tony
26
09:55
Wind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Wormaholics
27
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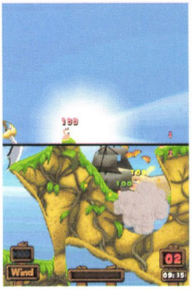
Wind


02
09:15
Wind

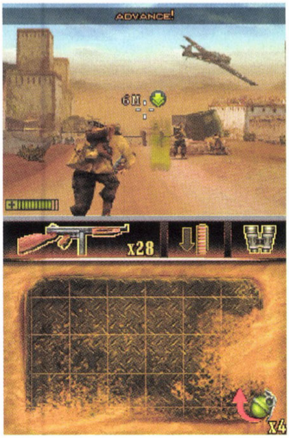
The Greatest Generation

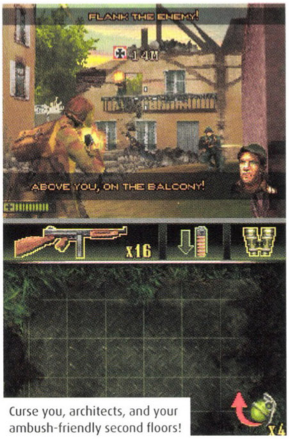
>BROTHERS IN ARMS DS

PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **GAMELOFT** • RELEASE: **JUNE 2007**

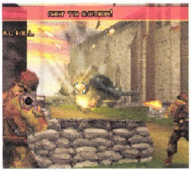
World War II has never looked so good on a Nintendo handheld as it does in Ubisoft's Brothers in Arms DS. The detailed 3-D landscape on the system's top screen puts you into the middle of the action, surrounded by enemy soldiers, tanks, and lots of explosions. As you guide your G.I. through the battlefield using the Control Pad (or X, Y, A, and B Buttons if you're left-handed), you follow mission waypoints that take you to where the enemies are. Aiming, camera control, and grenade-tossing are accomplished through stylus-driven touch control.

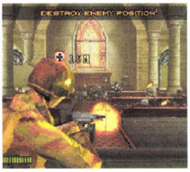
The single-player campaign starts in Normandy. After a few missions, you have the opportunity to move on to Tunis then Ardennes, moving back and forth between the three locations. In addition to fighting on foot, you drive tanks and jeeps. In one particularly exciting mission, you are charged with using a tank to destroy a building so the debris will block an armored train. Multiplayer battles for four participants are also available. —GEORGE S.

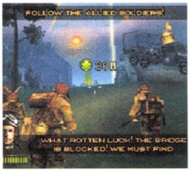

ADVANCE!
6M
x28
x4

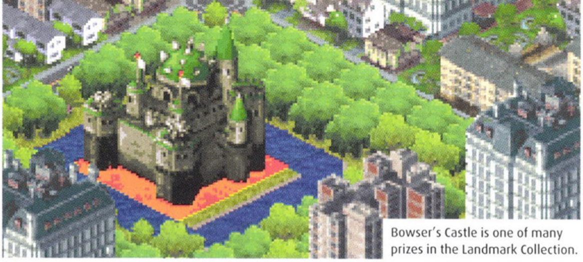

FLANK THE ENEMY!
14M
ABOVE YOU, ON THE BALCONY!
x16
x4

Curse you, architects, and your ambush-friendly second floors!

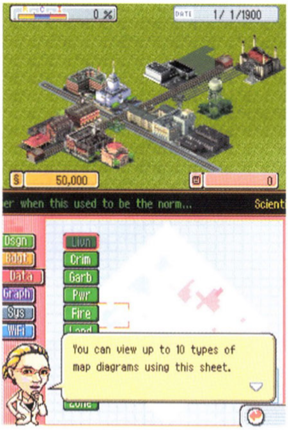

GET TO COVER!


DESTROY ENEMY POSITION!
15M

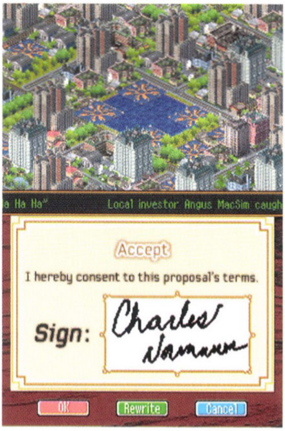

FOLLOW THE ALLIED SOLDIERS!
30M
WHAT ROTTEN LUCK! THE BRIDGE IS BLOCKED! WE MUST FIND



Bowser's Castle is one of many prizes in the Landmark Collection.



You can view up to 10 types of map diagrams using this sheet.



I hereby consent to this proposal's terms.

Summer in the City

>SIMCITY DS

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: AKI/EAP JAPAN • RELEASE: SUMMER 2007

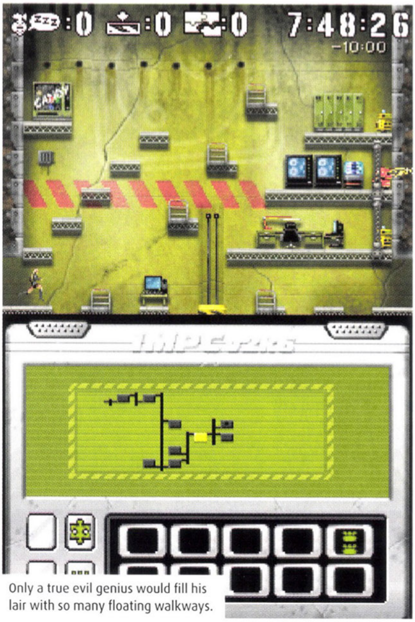
This summer SimCity fans can indulge their civic-minded obsession wherever they go when the city-building and -management simulation comes to DS. SimCity DS builds on the foundations of the venerated franchise, including everything Sim mayors have come to expect, such as awards; disaster scenarios; multiple initial landforms on which to build; full control of city planning and zoning; critical data delivered via charts, graphs and news tickers; and 3-D graphic views of their evolving metropolis. But the DS game's architects have gone even further, adding precise touch-screen control, a Post Office feature that allows you to connect via Wi-Fi with other mayors and receive special gifts, and an additional set of special awards called the Landmark Collection that features famous structures from around the globe and other-more-fanciful locales. For simulation fans, SimCity DS is not to be missed. —SCOTT P.

Play Awhile, Play Forever

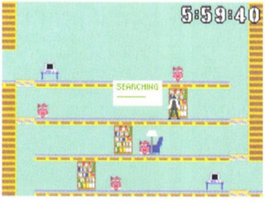
>IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

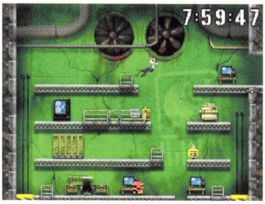
PLATFORM: DS (ALSO ON Wii) • PUBLISHER: SYSTEM 3
DEVELOPER: ZIGGURAT INTERACTIVE • RELEASE: MAY 2007

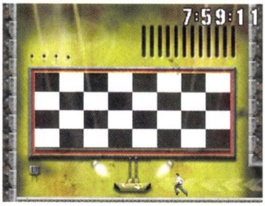
If you played video games during the 8-bit era, chances are you had some experience with the thrills and intrigue of Impossible Mission. Originally released by Epyx for the Commodore 64 in 1984, Impossible Mission tasks you—a lone special operative—with infiltrating Dr. Elvin Atombender's randomly generated underground lair, avoiding his traps and legions of robot sentries, and finding the secret passcodes to prevent nuclear disaster. Unlike most special agents, the hero of Impossible Mission is completely unarmed; you'll have to rely on precise jumping skill, puzzle-solving talent, and your ability to hack into enemy computers to succeed. Along with a perfect re-creation of the original game, the DS release includes an updated version with modernized graphics and sound, and a merged mode featuring elements of both. System 3 is also planning a Wii version of Impossible Mission that you can download through the Wii Shop Channel. —CHRIS H.



Only a true evil genius would fill his lair with so many floating walkways.







No Mere Mortal

>MORTAL KOMBAT: ARMAGEDDON

PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: MIDWAY
DEVELOPER: JGI/MIDWAY • RELEASE: MAY 2007

The Kombatents of Midway's Mortal Kombat series have been lopping off heads and tearing out spines for nearly a decade and a half, but the latest chapter of the fighting franchise may be its crowning achievement.

"Armageddon is the biggest MK game ever," asserts Mortal Kombat cocreator Ed Boon. "It has every character to appear in a previous MK fighter and is the most accessible MK game ever. It has a complete single-player adventure game as well as the Motor Kombat [kart racing] minigame, all included with the biggest fighting roster in MK history."

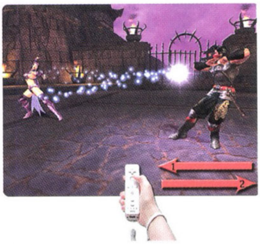
While some fighting series have been content to remain relatively the same with each installment, Mortal Kombat has gone through some dramatic changes over the years. In the Wii version of Armageddon, the big change is the inclusion of gesture-based controls. Though you can opt to play the game the traditional way—by using the Wii's Classic Controller or a GCN pad—the game gives you the chance to unleash special moves and fatalities with simple movements of the Wii remote (and sometimes the nunchuk).

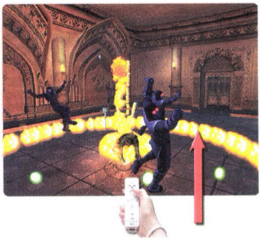
"A good fighting game first of all needs to be fun to as many people as possible," states Boon. "This means it has to be accessible, and this is exactly what Armageddon does. Particularly with the Wii remote. Literally anyone can do special moves with the Wii remote, so anyone can experience the game and have fun with it."

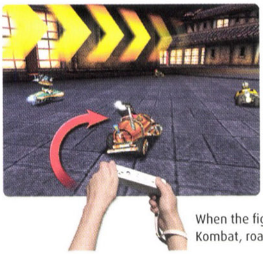
Motion-based control isn't the only addition. Though the game hit last-gen consoles in 2006, Wii is the only place to test your skills in Endurance mode (in which you attempt to defeat as many opponents as possible with one health bar) or play as female ninja Khameleon. Khameleon has only appeared in one previous MK game—the N64 version of Mortal Kombat Trilogy—and while she still borrows special moves from other female fighters (like Tanya, Mileena, and Kitana), her Eagle Claw fighting style makes her a character all her own.

"We always knew we wanted to have an exclusive character for the Wii version of Armageddon," Boon explains. "Since Armageddon already had just about every MK character, we had to really go for the obscure, rare MK character with Khameleon. . . . In some ways, people might consider her to be more powerful than those other female characters because she has the best they have to offer, all in one character."

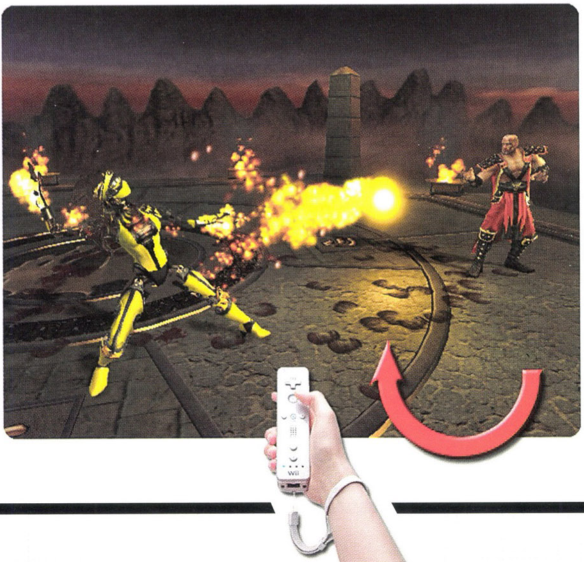
Player skill will determine which fighter from Earthrealm or Outworld claims final victory, but if all goes according to Midway's plans, Mortal Kombat: Armageddon will reign supreme as the definitive fighting game on Wii. —CHRIS H.






When the fighters hit the streets in Motor Kombat, road rage is guaranteed.

Khameleon blends in perfectly on Wii.



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07
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VI

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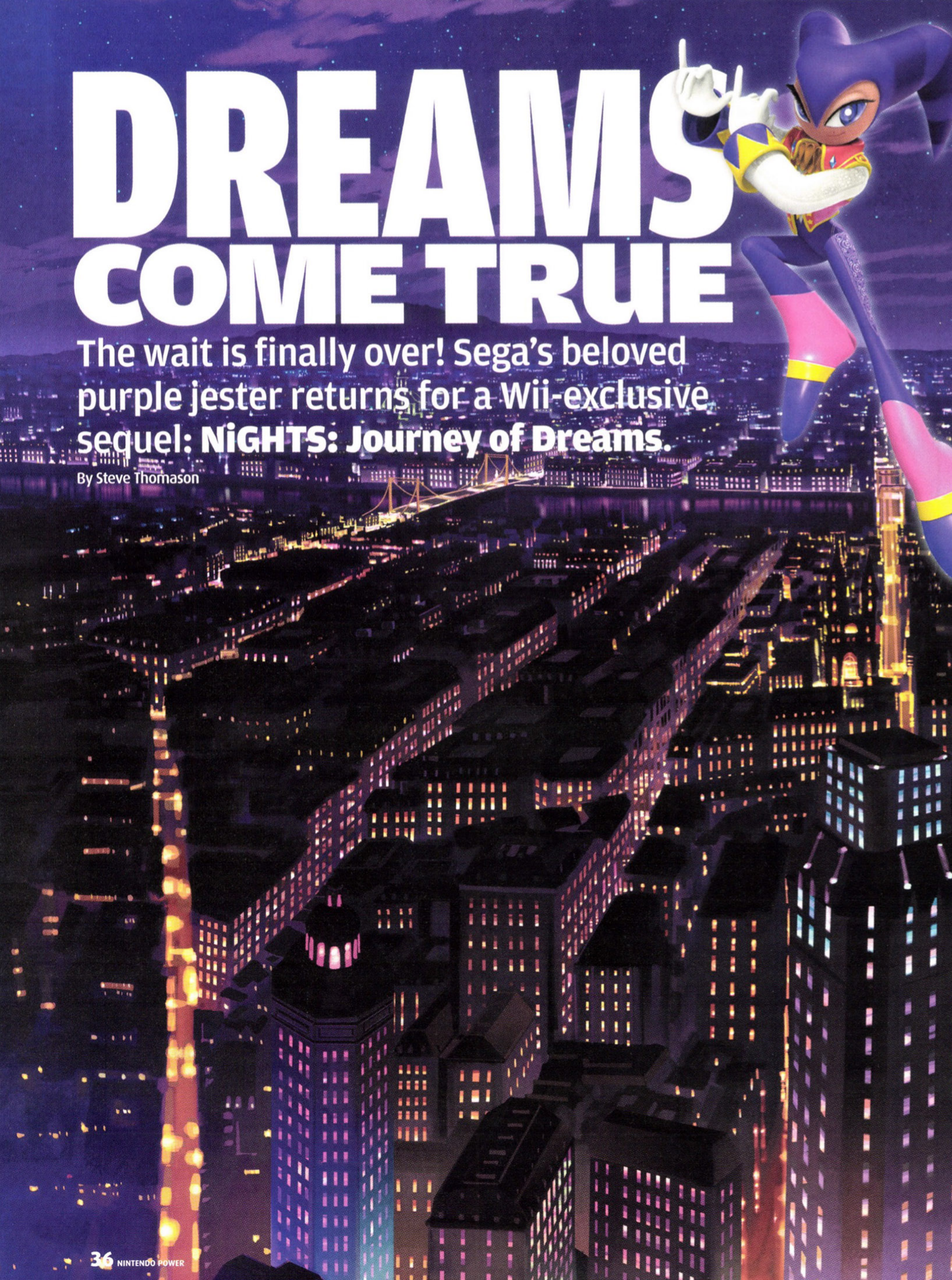
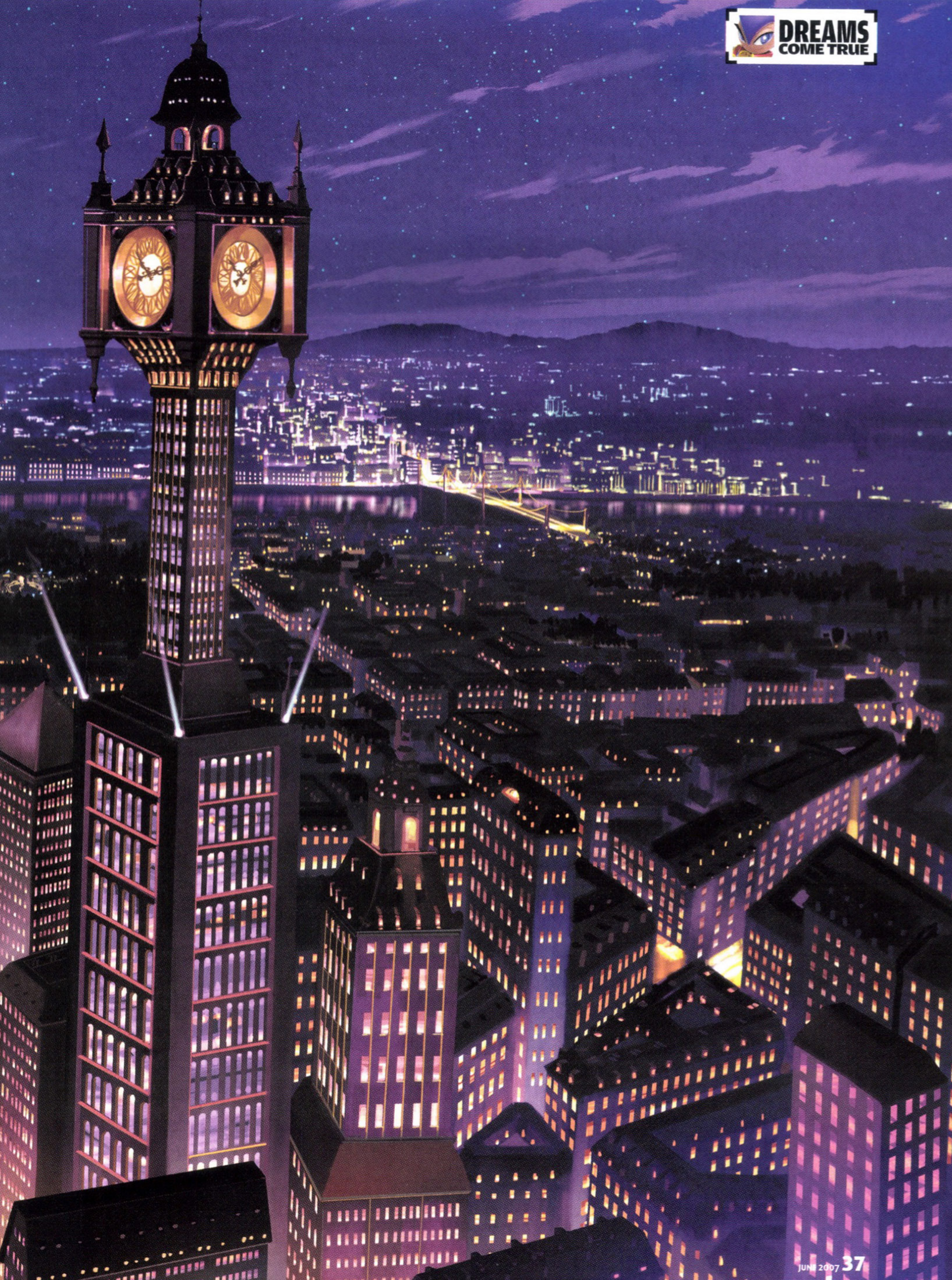
DREAMS COME TRUE

The wait is finally over! Sega's beloved purple jester returns for a Wii-exclusive sequel: **NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams.**

By Steve Thomason





"I think the [Wii], especially with its innovative controller, lends itself perfectly to NiGHTS." —Takashi Iizuka

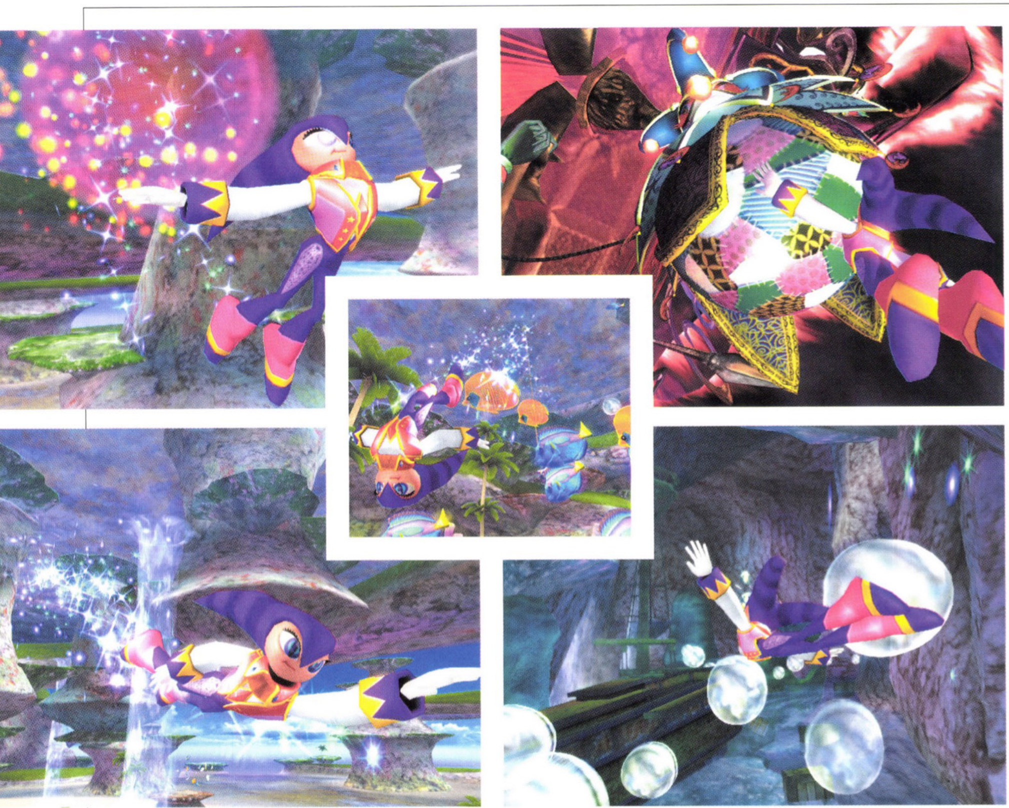
If you're a NiGHTS fan, you already know that this is a momentous occasion (and you probably danced a little jig when you saw our cover). But for those of you who missed out on the 1996 Sega Saturn classic, here's a bit of history. Developed by Sonic Team, the acclaimed studio responsible for the creation of a certain blue hedgehog, NiGHTS into Dreams was positioned as the keystone title for Sega's 32-bit console. While the game achieved modest commercial and critical success, it didn't make nearly the splash of its heavyweight competitors at the time, Super Mario 64 and Crash Bandicoot. Over the years, however, more and more gamers have come to embrace the title as a whimsical, one-of-a-kind masterpiece. Its imaginative worlds, irresistible soundtrack, and ability to convey that dreamlike sensation of flying have landed the game on many a list of all-time cult classics. But despite fans' impassioned pleas for a follow-up, Sega has never seen fit to revisit the wondrous world of Nightopia . . . until now.

"Ever since NiGHTS was released 11 years ago, I've always dreamt of making the sequel," divulges Journey of Dreams producer Takashi Iizuka, who served as lead designer on the original game. "Over the years, neither the market nor the [available] platforms seemed right for creating the sequel. . . . That is, until Nintendo released the Wii. I think the system, especially with its innovative controller, lends itself perfectly to NiGHTS." And thus, one of gaming's most eagerly anticipated follow-ups will land exclusively on Wii later this year.

Bedtime Story

NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams retains the same core premise as the first game—that when we fall asleep, we're magically transported to Nightopia, a fantastical dimension where our dreams are played out. Among Nightopia's denizens is an acrobatic jesterlike creature called NiGHTS, who in the Saturn original enlisted the help of two brave children—Elliot and Claris—to stop Wizeman the Wicked, ruler of nightmares, from taking over the dream world. Though details regarding the story in Journey of Dreams remain under wraps, Iizuka reveals that Wizeman has returned for the sequel, and that NiGHTS must combat the malevolent being by resolving a new assortment of human struggles as manifested in people's dreams.

"The core influence that governs the world of NiGHTS is greatly ingrained in the philosophy of Carl Jung's archetypes," explains Iizuka. "Within each human being, there is an abundance of creative imagination, and it's from this consciousness that we try to draw our inspiration for the game. When we dream, we are bonded by our personal conflicts and what we do to resolve them. This is what makes NiGHTS empowering and inspiring to me." It's a bit of a heady concept, but the upshot is that players will fly through an all-new collection of seven themed dreamscapes while battling Wizeman's nightmarish minions.



Of course, what makes the decision to put Journey of Dreams on Wii so exciting is that you'll be able to control NiGHTS's movements directly by manipulating the Wii remote. If you move your hand left, NiGHTS will glide in the same direction. Rotate your hand, and the jester will fly on his side. "Originally, NiGHTS (for Sega Saturn) was released with a special 3-D controller that intensified the flight experience," recalls Iizuka. "With the Wii, I thought it would be a perfect chance to re-create that type of immersion. Ultimately, we want to create an experience that extends [the sensation of flying] directly to the player through the controller." For gamers who prefer to play the old-fashioned way, the developers are including the option to plug in the nunchuk for a more "traditional" control configuration.

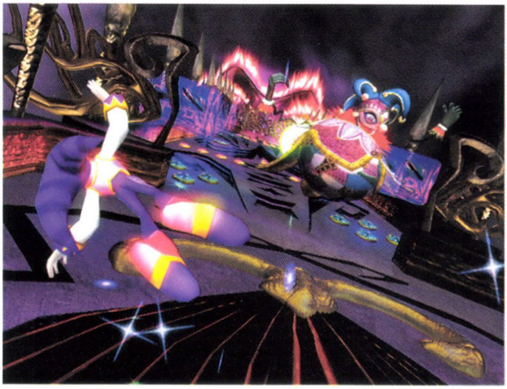
Flight of Fancy

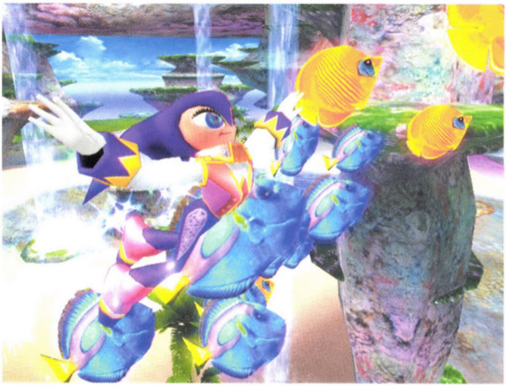
One of the things that made the original NiGHTS so memorable was the skill and grace with which its titular hero soared through the air, swooping through rings and performing all manner of acrobatics. To preserve that gracefulness in Journey of Dreams, Iizuka and his team were forced to make a tough decision. "During the prototype phase of creating the sequel, we experimented with many different approaches to NiGHTS's main gameplay mechanic, including free-roaming [exploration]," recalls the producer. "But we found it didn't lend itself naturally to the acrobatic feel of NiGHTS's flight system. We discovered that utilizing the on-rails system as the original game did gave us the ability and flexibility to precisely control the vertical movement of NiGHTS, which just felt better, especially when executing acrobatic moves in the air."

Another way the developers want Journey of Dreams to follow in its predecessor's footsteps is by being accessible enough so that anyone can play, while giving more-devoted players an incentive to hone their skills and master each stage. The original game is at its best when an experienced player gets in the zone and starts blasting through an area with pinpoint precision. As Iizuka says, "It's almost like a racing game, where the objective is not just to clear the level, but to clear it in the best way possible. That was very important to keep for the sequel." As a result, players will once again receive a ranking based on how skillfully they clear each level.

While preserving what made the original NiGHTS so special is crucial to the development team, they're also dedicated to building on that framework to ensure that Journey of Dreams is an equally memorable experience. "We are designing the sequel to incorporate a variety of gameplay styles that will make this game truly stand out," says Iizuka. "And there will be areas that feel more expansive [than those in the original game], allowing you to control NiGHTS like never before imaginable." The producer isn't prepared to discuss the subject in greater specificity, but he promises that the new gameplay mechanics will challenge players' expectations, and "entice them to reveal the stories behind each dream."

Further blending of old and new comes in





the form of NiGHTS's repertoire. The purple protagonist can perform all of his signature moves from the first game, including a high-speed drill attack, the ability to grab onto enemies for the purpose of throwing them, and the paraloop, which carves a hole out of space and magically whisks away adversaries when NiGHTS completes a loop around them. For Journey of Dreams, our hero will also gain shape-shifting abilities that grant him various new powers. The developers are still working out the specifics regarding how these abilities will work, but Iizuka hopes they'll bring a whole new dynamic to the way the game plays.

While you'll spend the vast majority of the time controlling NiGHTS, the game will also feature playable characters that can explore the world on foot, just like Elliot and Claris in the first game. Unfortunately, Iizuka wouldn't reveal the identity of NiGHTS's earthbound allies in Journey of Dreams (nor, for that matter, whether Elliot and Claris will appear in the sequel at all).

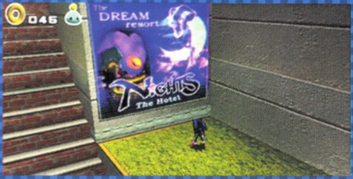
One topic Iizuka is willing to open up about is boss encounters. He wants players to think of them not as mere battles, but as their own stages built around a unique theme and play mechanic. "Each boss stage is designed with a particular imagery pursuant to how a certain character's dreams take form," says Iizuka. And these aren't pleasant dreams like those that form Nightopia; for each confrontation, NiGHTS is transported to the appropriately named world of Nightmare. In the encounter versus the patchwork boss pictured in our screenshots, NiGHTS must force his opponent to the top of a maze while the super-sized evildoer bounces around the walls and attempts to crush our hero. You can defeat the boss only after navigating the entire labyrinth, which Iizuka hints will contain impediments other than your main adversary. The producer also states that players will be able to discover special techniques that allow them to complete each boss stage much more quickly than usual (and thus earn a better ranking).

Fly-by NiGHTS

The wait for a NiGHTS follow-up has been long and difficult. Over the years, while fans' pleas for a sequel went unanswered, Sega included frequent cameos from the 32-bit classic in the company's other titles. Loving tribute or merciless taunting? You decide. Here is but a small sampling of NiGHTS sightings from the past decade.

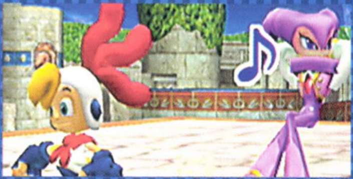
Sonic Adventure 2 Battle

Posters plastered everywhere in the City Escape stage invite us to stay at NiGHTS The Hotel, which you can later spot in the skyline of the Radical Highway stage. You can also raise a Chao that strongly resembles NiGHTS's titular hero.



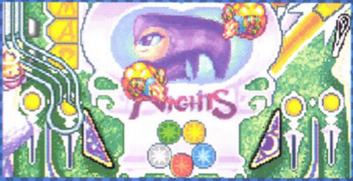
Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg

The coolest NiGHTS cameo of all time allows you to hatch the flying jester from a special Sonic Team egg. Both Billy Hatcher and Phantasy Star Online also feature a NiGHTS Score Attack minigame that you can download to the GBA.



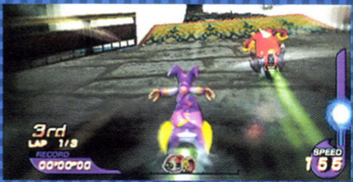
Sonic Pinball Party

This overlooked gem offers an entire pinball table devoted to NiGHTS, and the character plays a minor role in the game's "storyline." Another table is based on Samba de Amigo. How about a Wii sequel to that game next, Sega?



Sonic Riders

You can unlock NiGHTS as a playable character in this high-speed racer, and sections of the Sega Carnival and Sega Illusion tracks are modeled after Nightopia.



Sweet Dreams

Although Yuji Naka and Naoto Ohshima (the producer and director, respectively, on NiGHTS into Dreams) have left Sega to start their own studios, fans will be delighted to learn that several other members of the original NiGHTS development staff have reunited with Iizuka for Journey of Dreams. Among them is Naofumi Hataya, the man responsible for the first game's fantastic music. "I was really happy to be able to work with Mr. Hataya again," enthuses Iizuka. "[As with the rest of Journey of Dreams], the challenge for us will be to stay consistent in our music direction while giving it a new dimension. I anticipate another memorable soundtrack for the sequel." If any of the tracks are half as catchy as "Dreams Dreams" (the main theme from the original), we'll be very happy campers.

We're also eager to see Nightopia come alive on modern-day hardware (the Saturn wasn't exactly a polygon-pushing powerhouse). According to Iizuka, "Journey of Dreams is running on a completely new engine built from the ground up and designed specifically for Wii. We're finding that there are some very interesting graphical effects and processes that we can utilize with this engine. We're excited to see how far we can push the hardware!" Of course, much of the first game's appeal stemmed from its inspired art direction, and that's another area that seems to be in good hands—Kazuyuki Hoshino (one of the Saturn title's main character designers) is heading up the sequel's visual design.

Journey of Dreams really is a labor of love for Iizuka's team. They even want to bring back the peculiar A-Life system—a precursor to the Chao featured in the Sonic Adventure titles—which allowed players to breed adorable creatures called Nightopians, and tracked their mood based on your behavior toward the defenseless little guys. "The A-Life component in the original NiGHTS was a very popular feature that our fans loved," says Iizuka. "My wish is that we can somehow give back something special like the A-Life feature to those fans who have been waiting so long for this game." The team also has plans for WiiConnect24 compatibility, though Iizuka says it's too early to go into detail. "But like dreams that universally link the human experience, I want to somehow be able to share this using the network," he offers.

Based on what we've seen thus far, NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams looks to be everything fans could hope for. But does Iizuka feel any extra pressure working on a game with such stratospheric expectations? "Not at all," he insists. "What really drives me is to completely satisfy all of those loyal fans that have waited 11 years for a sequel. If it was not for the voices of those fans, this project would never have been possible. Now I have that chance to create the game on a new console that allows me the creative freedom to do things I could only have imagined years before. This is like a dream come true for me." And for us, too.

“What really drives me is to completely satisfy all those loyal fans that have waited 11 years for a sequel.” —Takashi Iizuka

Wii Channels

Retro Gaming Gets a New Coat of Paint

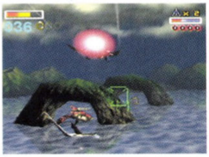
As Virtual Console steadily amasses a large library of games, one fact has come to light: The VC versions of the classics look much better than the originals.

THIS MONTH:

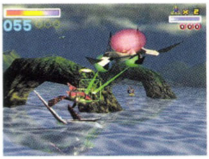
- Fox is looking goooooooood.
- New Virtual Console games

A FOXIER FOX

Anyone with eyes and an N64 can see that the Virtual Console versions of Ocarina of Time, Super Mario 64, Mario Kart 64, and Star Fox 64 look better than their original incarnations. All of the old games have been optimized to work on the more powerful Wii hardware, and the N64 seems to be benefitting the most from the bump in technological horsepower. In honor of Star Fox's arrival on Virtual Console, we did a side-by-side comparison of the two versions of the game. Rest assured, the VC version of Ocarina is equally impressive. The deluxe treatment these games are receiving has everyone here drafting N64 wish lists.



Star Fox 64, circa 1997: a great game, but the graphics are a bit on the muddy side.



Here's the same scene after having gone through the Virtual Console washing machine.

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

WHAT'S NEW IN RETRO GAMING!

11

Games

ALEX KIDD IN THE ENCHANTED CASTLE

Platform: **Sega Genesis**
Publisher: **Sega**
Genre: **Platformer**
Original Release: **1989**

WHAT: Leap, run, swim, shoot, and play rock-paper-scissors amidst 11 stages of platforming action.

WHY: Play this game to see the Kidd's last moment in the spotlight as Sega's unofficial mascot (and learn why Sonic replaced him). —**CH**

BONK'S REVENGE

STAFF PICK!

Platform: **TurboGrafx16**
Publisher: **NEC/Hudson**
Genre: **Platformer**
Original Release: **1991**

WHAT: The sequel to head-banging platformer Bonk's Adventure.

WHY: Bonk is arguably the biggest name on the TurboGrafx, and Revenge has more of everything that made the original a hit—better graphics, more-complex stages, and new moves. —**CH**

VIRTUAL CONSOLE SPOTLIGHT

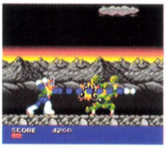
STAFF PICK!

BEYOND OASIS

Platform: **Sega Genesis**
Publisher: **Sega**
Genre: **Action-RPG**
Original Release: **1994**

Steve's Pick

Beyond Oasis is Sega's answer to The Legend of Zelda—if Link wore billowy pantaloons. This top-down action-RPG mixes solid combat with some fantastic puzzle design, and it's also one of the best-looking games ever released for Sega's 16-bit console. Famed composer Yuzo Koshiro founded the development studio responsible for Beyond Oasis, and not only wrote the music for the game, but also served as producer.



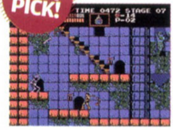
BRAVOMAN

Platform: TurboGrafx16
Publisher: NEC/Hudson
Genre: Action
Original Release: 1990

WHAT: A bizarre brawler/platformer starring a superhero-ish character with telescoping limbs.

WHY: Your enemy, Dr. Bomb, has a genuinely impressive hairdo that resembles purple cauliflower. You get to fight a totem pole. Your friend Lottery Man occasionally feeds Bravoman in exchange for lottery tickets. —DW

STAFF PICK!

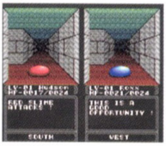


CASTLEVANIA

Platform: NES
Publisher: Konami
Genre: Action
Original Release: 1987

WHAT: The original vampire hunt starring Simon Belmont as a seventeenth century Transylvanian on a quest to kill Dracula.

WHY: Its controls may feel primitive compared to modern Castlevania titles, but the original tells a pivotal tale that the rest of the series hinges on. It's a must-play for Castlevania fans. —AM



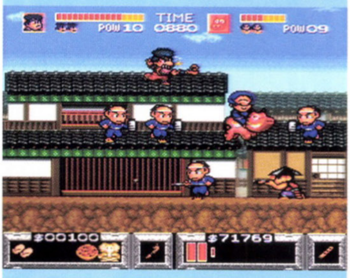
DOUBLE DUNGEONS

Platform: TurboGrafx16
Publisher: NEC/Hudson
Genre: RPG
Original Release: 1990

WHAT: This early first-person-perspective RPG lets you explore dungeons solo or with a friend—hence the game's title.

WHY: In spite of the game's age, the first-person viewpoint runs smoothly, even in two-player mode. RPG novices will appreciate the game's accessibility. —CH

VIRTUAL CONSOLE SPOTLIGHT



THE LEGEND OF THE MYSTICAL NINJA

Platform: Super NES
Publisher: Konami
Genre: Adventure
Original Release: 1992

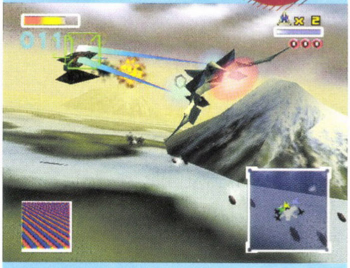
Chris H.'s Pick

With its quirky sense of humor and creative blending of action and adventure elements, the Mystical Ninja (aka Goemon) series is wildly successful in Japan. Though the same isn't true in North America, this 16-bit gem is not to be missed. An awesome soundtrack, co-op gameplay, and a Gradius minigame are among the highlights.

STAFF PICK!

VIRTUAL CONSOLE SPOTLIGHT

STAFF PICK!

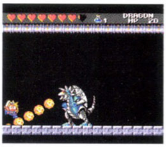


STAR FOX 64

Platform: N64
Publisher: Nintendo
Genre: Shooter
Original Release: 1997

Drew's Pick

Nintendo took the furry-animal-shoots-stuff-in-space subgenre to new heights with Star Fox 64, a (mostly) rail shooter with no save function, one skill level, and lots of silly dialogue. So why am I recommending it? I love the sound of Slippy's sad little voice saying, "Noooo!" Plus, the pacing is lightning-fast, and shooting at evil, talking monkeys is great fun.

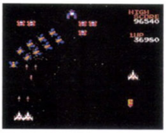


DRAGON'S CURSE

Platform: TurboGrafx16
Publisher: NEC/Hudson
Genre: Action
Original Release: 1991

WHAT: One of the many games from the Wonder Boy family tree, Dragon's Curse puts you in control of a knight who has the unfortunate displeasure of being turned into a dragon.

WHY: If you're already a fan of the Wonder Boy series, chances are you'll like this. Plus, the fact that you can turn into different animals makes it very Kirby-like. —GV

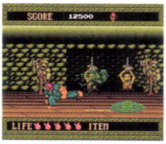


GALAGA

Platform: NES
Publisher: Bandai
Genre: Shooter
Original Release: 1988

WHAT: A port of the classic arcade game in which swarms of alien insects must be exterminated.

WHY: In addition to being the most famous top-down shooter in history, Galaga is a blast to play. One of the game's key features is its ship-capturing system, which offers a lot of strategy in an otherwise straightforward shooter. —AM



SPLATTERHOUSE

Platform: TurboGrafx16
Publisher: NEC/Hudson
Genre: Action
Original Release: 1990

WHAT: A violent and bizzare game in which you punch, kick, and splatter enemies against the wall with 2x4s, shotguns, and other weapons.

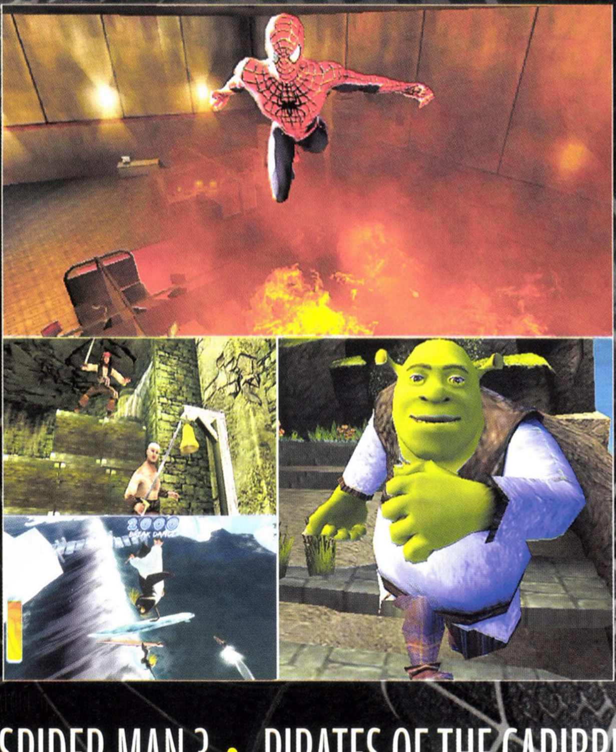
STAFF PICK!

WHY: It's like being in a bizarro world where Jason from Friday the 13th becomes some weird psycho-hero, trying to pulverize evil in the bowels of a creepy mansion. Yeah, what? —GV

Think Outside the Box Office

Spider-Man 3 leads the charge of probable blockbusters jumping from the big screen to Nintendo systems. Let the games begin.

By Chris Hoffman and George Sinfield



The much-publicized movie ticket-sales slump of recent years will likely come to an end this summer. Five of the all-time top-ten worldwide box-office champs (including *Shrek*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and Harry Potter) will have film follow-ups before Labor Day, and a surefire new series—*Transformers*—hits screens in July. But theaters aren't the only place to catch Hollywood hits; many of the films have accompanying game adaptations coming to Wii, DS, and other Nintendo systems. Movie-based games once had a reputation for being rushed projects with formulaic play, but recent titles, such as EA's The Lord of the Rings games and Ubisoft's innovative adaptation of *Peter Jackson's King Kong*, have helped elevate movie games beyond mere cash ins—a trend we expect to continue with this summer's crop. Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End on Wii will be the franchise's first appearance on a Nintendo home console, while Harry Potter's latest will work its magic in new and innovative ways. The summer will also see the Wii debuts of games based on *Shrek the Third*, Pixar's *Ratatouille*, and *Surf's Up*. And though Spider-Man appeared in Marvel: Ultimate Alliance, his web-slinging antics will get a true Wii workout in Spider-Man 3. That's where our examination of movie adaptations begins.

SPIDER-MAN 3 • PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END

TRANSFORMERS • SHREK THE THIRD • HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX

RATATOUILLE • SURF'S UP

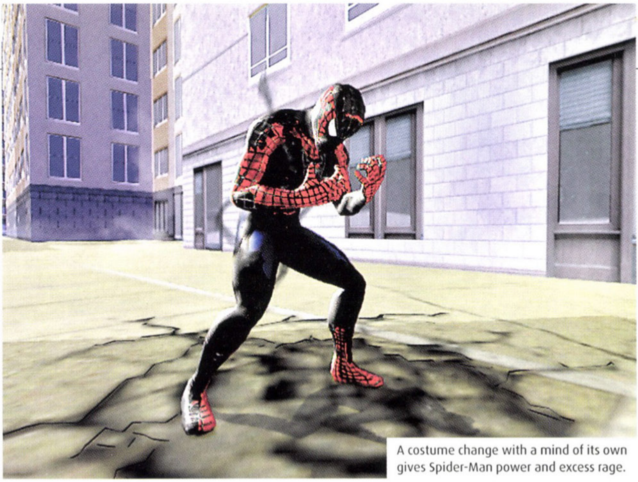
SPIDER-MAN 3

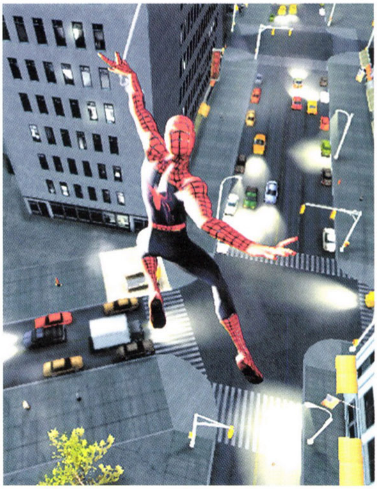
FREE-SWINGING GETS REAL WITH Wii CONTROL.

He was the ring announcer in Sam Raimi's original Spider-Man film and the snooty usher in *Spider-Man 2*. And, though longtime Raimi collaborator Bruce Campbell doesn't have a role in Spidey's latest celluloid outing, he does return to his in-game job as the tour guide in Activision's *Spider-Man 3* adaptation. "It's not a Spider-Man game without him," says producer Juan Valdes as Campbell's voice emits from the television speakers during a recent game demonstration: "OK, web-slinger. Time to sling some webs. Press and hold the swing button and cast out a web line by flicking the Wii remote." Campbell's narration is not the only element from the publisher's successful series of wall-crawler games back for another spin. As it was in Spider-Man 2, the game's NYC environment is a swing-anywhere-beat-up-anybody playground (now two-and-a-half times larger) and the graphics (as before) strike an attractive balance between movie-inspired realism and the hero's comic-book roots. The most stunning new feature is (as Campbell mentions in his instructions) the Wii version's motion-controlled web-slinging. "We came to the conclusion that we had a unique opportunity to really make players feel like they are Spider-Man," explains Valdes while production coordinator Matthew Hunt shows off the game's flick-and-fly controls. Hunt thrusts his right hand forward while holding the remote's B Button to make the superhero release webbing and swing with his right hand once the elastic rope attaches to the side of a building. Hunt then juts his left hand forward while holding the nunchuk's Z Button to make Spidey shoot and swing with his left hand. And on he goes over a crowded city street, Hunt steering him with the Control Stick as he searches for thugs to thump. "There you go," intones Campbell. "Now you're a real swinger."

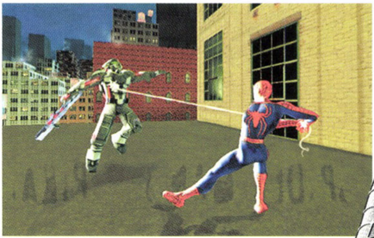
"Locomotion is this huge package," says Valdes, referring to the ways that remote-whipping Wii control allows you to traverse the city. "There's wall-running, wall-grinding, web-zipping, jumping, and the swing boost . . . a timing system that lets you gain speed or height, adding about 20 percent to the distance that you get after you let go of the web." Fighting moves also provide hand-waving aerobic exercise. A simple slash of the remote triggers a weak attack. Swipes with both controllers cause Spidey to pull off a strong attack, and more-complex movements signal him to execute unlockable advanced moves, such as the Web Rodeo, which has Spider-Man giving a thug a ride on his webbing while you make a circular motion with the remote. Given that he is Spider-Man, the webbing figures in to a lot of his attacks.

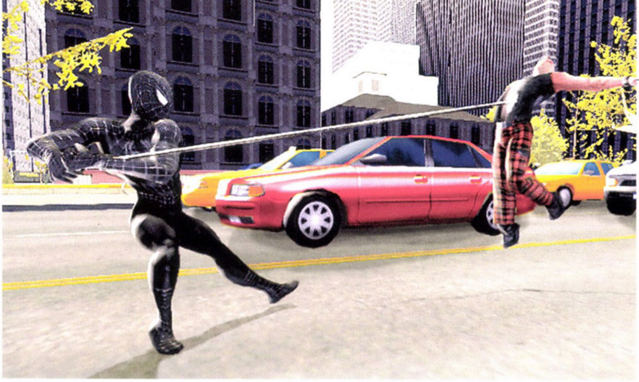
Another fighting factor is also a core element of the new film: Spidey's mysterious symbiotic black suit, which symbolizes otherworldly rage and gives the hero even more power. "If red-suit Spider-Man's pattern is quick attack, quick attack, subdue, then black-suit Spider-Man is quick attack, quick attack, strong, strong, pound," explains Valdes. "His health goes up. He's stronger, faster. He's still Peter Parker. He still saves the good guys. It's just that he's going to be a bit rougher with the bad guys." Unlike other


A costume change with a mind of its own gives Spider-Man power and excess rage.

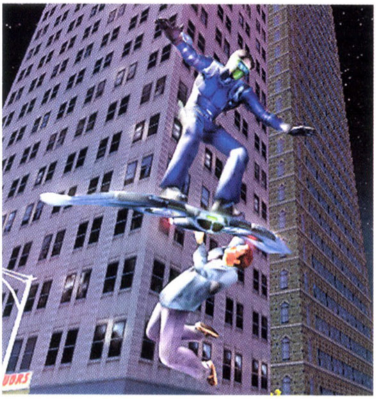


> **"...we had a unique opportunity to make players feel like they are Spider-Man."**
>
> **—Juan Valdes, producer**


Shoot and pull—you move your hands and Spidey's answer in kind with superheroic attacks.



next-gen versions of the game, in which switches to the black suit are scripted events, the Wii version allows you to take on the arachnid's tougher form any time you please. But power comes at a cost. The more you depend on the black suit to vanquish your enemies, the more rage builds up in the hero, until he eventually blacks out and wakes up in a different part of the city. Sojourns into unconsciousness allow bad elements to wrest control of the city away from the authorities. If you are unable to fight off the four gangs that battle each other and the police for NYC territories, the game's City Satisfaction Index decreases, trash piles up on the sidewalks, the skies become darker, more criminals move in, and health-regenerating ambulances become scarce. "In essence, the city is reflecting how much attention you've paid to it," explains Valdes.



New-look Spidey is poised to pounce. Villains beware.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Reel Gems

Game adaptations of movies are more prevalent than ever, especially as game makers cultivate classics such as *The Godfather* and *Scarface*. Here's our list of must-have movies that are ripe for interactive treatment:

Bullitt (1968)

MPTV.net.

If Steve McQueen had made movies in a different era, he'd be a video game standby. The chase between the Charger and the Mustang is one of the most famous driving sequences in film history. Combine it with the chase in *The French Connection* and you've got something.

Commando (1985)

We're going to assume that the only reason there was never a game based on Arnold's manly-man action flick *Commando* is that there was already a Capcom game with the same name. Because with all the flying bullets and flying bodies, it'd be one heck of an action-shooter.

Forrest Gump (1994)

You could go old-school platformer and use chocolates as power-ups while Forrest jumps through decade-themed levels, or adapt more of a play-the-movie approach with war, running, and shrimp fishing. Either way, there's a lot of game there.

Gladiator (2000)

It's burly guys in togas fighting in arenas! How could this have not been made into a game? We'd skip all of the story stuff and get right to the chain whipping. The movie would join *The Godfather*, *Rocky*, and *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King* as best picture Oscar winners that have received game adaptations.

Saving Private Ryan (1998)

The movie was the model for EA's Medal of Honor series. In fact the opening D-Day level of Medal of Honor: Frontline is more or less the opening scene of the movie, right down to the bullets firing through the water. But the film has plenty of other set-piece battles that could go interactive.

The Shining (1980)

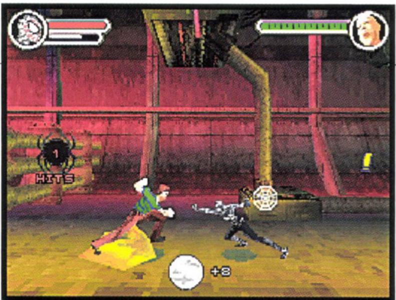
A compelling character who carries an ax, a creepy setting (with Jack Nicholson and a hedge maze, no less), and lots of disturbing imagery; put this movie in the hands of the team that made Killer 7 and you would have one twisted game.

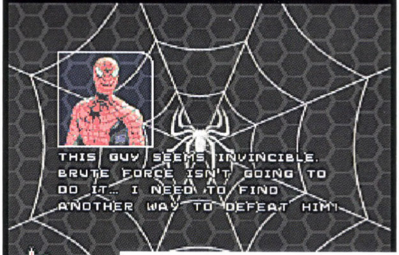
Though the fight against street thugs is a large part of the game, the struggle versus classic Spidey villains is even larger. One of the game's storylines follows the events of the film, which include a showdown with the New Goblin atop his glider, and a subway-station-set clash with Sandman in which the goal is to throw the flowing foe into oncoming trains. Also in the offing are skirmishes with Venom (another part of the film story), the Lizard, mad scientist Carlyle, Shriek, and Mobius. You can sample from all of the storylines as you swing through the city and enter missions at your own discretion.

The DS version of Spider-Man 3 (developed by Vicarious Visions, as is the Wii game) has a similar open structure, allowing you to hop around sections of the city and sample from various storylines. Within each section, the game plays like a side-scroller. When Spidey turns a corner, the camera whips around the bend to give you a lateral view of the scene. You make Spidey move using the Control Pad (or the corresponding A, B, X, and Y Buttons, if you're left-handed) and attack villains by making swipes on the touch screen. Unlockable moves (available for purchase in the game's store) have you drawing circles and other patterns with your stylus. Black-suit transformations take place automatically in the DS version after you've demonstrated enough aggressive behavior to build up Peter Parker's rage. We predict that both the Wii and DS titles will be all the rage with Spider-Man fans when they debut alongside the film in early May.

> **"...black-suit Spider-Man is quick attack, quick attack, strong, strong, pound."**
>
> **—Juan Valdes, producer**

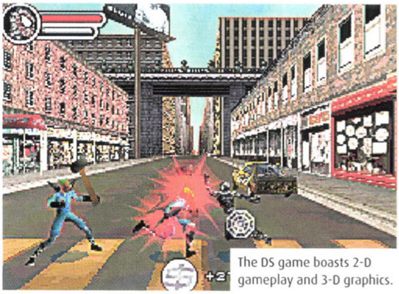
Veteran actor Thomas Hayden Church provides the voice of porous villain Sandman.





THIS GUY SEEMS INVINCIBLE. BRUTE FORCE ISN'T GOING TO DO IT... I NEED TO FIND ANOTHER WAY TO DEFEAT HIM!

The black-suit pattern is the default background, but additional designs are unlockable.



The DS game boasts 2-D gameplay and 3-D graphics.

Like father, like son. Harry Osborn picks up the Green Goblin's pumpkin bombs.

ARE YOU GAME?

Play This

So, a movie that you're looking forward to seeing this summer doesn't have an accompanying game. What are you to do if you want to accentuate your movie-going experience? We have some suggestions of games that will help fill the void.

May 4th

Lucky You

It's not exactly blockbuster material but this World Series of Poker-set drama from director Curtis Hanson (*8 Mile*, *L.A. Confidential*) does have video game potential. It's like Activision's World Series of Poker games (Wii and DS) only with Drew Barrymore as the plucky female lead instead of Jennifer Tilly.

May 11th

28 Weeks Later . . .

The undead of the *28 Days Later* sequel are not zombies, and neither are the wandering antagonists of Resident Evil 4 (GCN). While you're waiting to watch the fate of near-future England unfold, try tangling with the chainsaw guy and company in RE4's unnamed European location.

May 25th

Bug

As if going up against *Pirates of the Caribbean* wasn't enough, Ashley Judd has to deal with real or imagined parasites in this psychological thriller. Try contending with Resident Evil 2's (N64, GCN) T-virus outbreak before you watch Judd get all emotional and stuff.

June 8th

Ocean's 13

No great heist games come to mind, but Splinter Cell's Sam Fisher does know his way around an alarm system. He also looks remarkably like George Clooney. Plug in Splinter Cell: Double Agent (Wii, GCN) and imagine that the character is wearing a tuxedo instead of that super-spy jumpsuit.

June 22nd

Evan Almighty

Steve Carell has a god complex in the follow-up to *Bruce Almighty*. If you're really into the idea of lording over others, try SimCity (now available on Wii's Virtual Console), or anything with "Tycoon" at the end of the title.

June 29th

Live Free or Die Hard

Bruce Willis dodges explosions in NYC with the guy who plays the Mac in the Apple commercials. The obvious game tie-in would be 2002's Die Hard: Vendetta (GCN), a non-movie-related John McClane FPS. True Crime: New York City (GCN) is also a natural. And, because the plot has to do with bad guys taking over the Internet, here's a wildcard: Mega Man Battle Network (GBA).

August 3rd

The Bourne Ultimatum

There are strong connections between Jason Bourne and James Bond (besides the initials), so let us recommend a Bond game to get your secret-agent kicks this summer. You can't go wrong with GoldenEye 007 (N64; see "The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly" sidebar on p.53) or the more-recent Everything or Nothing (GCN).

September 21st

Resident Evil: Extinction

The Resident Evil machine keeps on chugging along. There's no game tie-in to Extinction, but any excuse to play RE4 is a good one. You know, that chainsaw guy's not going to attack himself!

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END

CAPT. JACK AND COMPANY BRING SWASHBUCKLING THRILLS TO NINTENDO SYSTEMS.

Ah, the open sea. The salty air. The supernaturally powered Davy Jones and his gargantuan pet Kraken that could pull you into the watery depths at any moment. Last summer's *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* proved to be the year's most successful movie in the United States, and the sequel, *At World's End*, could be just as dominating when it hits theaters on May 25. To coincide with the flick's release, Disney Interactive is letting fans live out their pirate fantasies with two distinct games for Wii and DS.

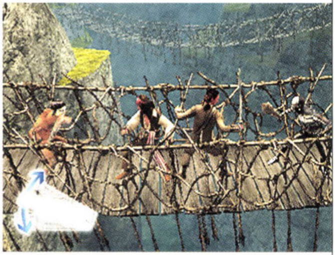
Since the second *Pirates* film didn't get a proper game treatment on home consoles, the developers at Eurocom are combining ideas from both *Dead Man's Chest* and *At World's End* with expanded story elements for the Wii debut of Capt. Jack Sparrow and company. Remember early on in *Dead Man's Chest* when Jack emerged from a floating coffin to avoid imprisonment? Now you'll get to experience firsthand how he got there as you help him escape from a prison fortress. Later levels take you to other famous locales, such as Port Royal, the cannibal-infested Isla de Pelegostos, the disreputable Tortuga Port, and the deck of Davy Jones' *Flying Dutchman*, plus numerous new locations.

Swordfighting is a big part of any pirate-themed adventure, and the game takes advantage of that fact by letting you swing the Wii remote to mimic wielding a blade, while you control character movement with the nunchuk's analog stick. A horizontal swing of the remote yields a weak slash, whereas a vertical swing unleashes a heavy attack and a thrusting motion lets you finish combos with a stab. Defense is just as important as offense; you block by holding the Z Button, and if you press a direction as an enemy attacks, you can retaliate with a kick, a counterattack, or an "olé," which allows you to dodge out of the way as your opponent sails past (potentially right off a cliff).

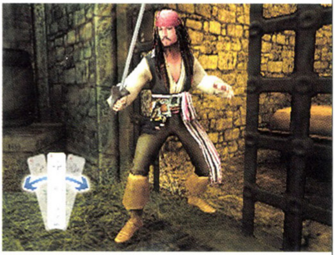
Sometimes, however, it's best to not fight at all. At certain points you'll encounter Jackanisms—special button-pressing and/or controller-waving sequences that let you use Jack's roguish behavior to stealthily bypass combat situations. Of course, Jack won't be

For a dead guy, Barbossa sure is a snappy dresser.

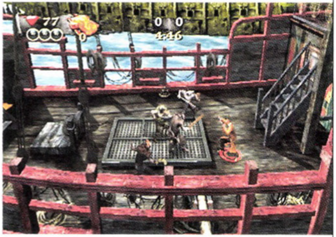
> **Disney Interactive is letting fans live out their pirate fantasies with two distinct games for Wii and DS.**



If you don't think fast, the cannibals of Isla de Pelegostos are gonna have a pirate sandwich.



Execute "Jackanisms" to avoid tricky combat situations by following the onscreen prompts.

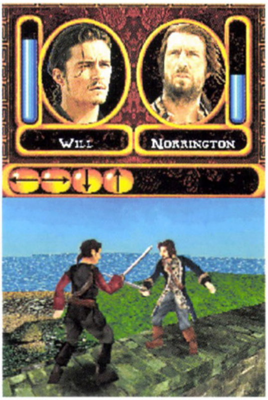


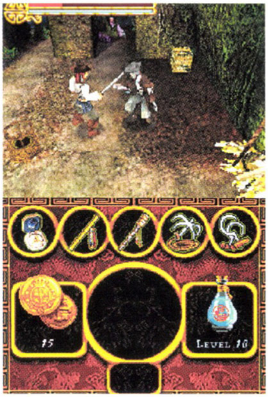
The dual-film adventure will take you everywhere from Port Royal to the decks of warring pirate ships.

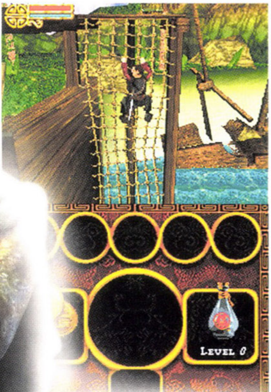
the only scallywag under your control; in addition to playing as marquee stars like Will Turner and Elizabeth Swann, you'll be able to unlock more than 50 characters from the franchise and use them to replay levels; the playable cast includes Capt. Barbossa, "Bootstrap" Bill Turner, Davy Jones, and even new characters from the third movie, such as Capt. Sao Feng (played by Chow Yun-Fat).

If you'd rather hit the high seas on the go, the DS adaptation of *At World's End* offers its own way to let you become a scurvy scoundrel. While the Wii game is primarily an action game, the DS version is more of an adventure, in which you control Jack, Will, and Elizabeth through 16 stages based on the third film. Most of the game revolves around using conventional play mechanics—moving with the Control Pad and jumping and attacking with the buttons—to explore 3-D stages filled with foes, hazardous leaps, and occasional puzzles and touch-screen minigames. The designers at Amaze Entertainment cite the Castlevania series as the inspiration for some of the game's features; you'll acquire secondary weapons (including a poison dagger, flash bombs, and a whip) as well as "adventure items" (a bamboo vaulting pole, a grappling hook, a torch, a compass, and climbing hooks) that let you access new areas.

In addition to the fairly traditional adventure stages, the DS game includes several boss duels that are controlled via the touch screen. By swiping up, down, left, or right with the stylus (or using more-complex moves that you'll learn as the game progresses), you can activate different attacks, and you block by pressing directions on the Control Pad. Beyond fighting CPU-controlled adversaries, you can square off in sword duels with a friend who also has a copy of the game, or engage in a round of Liar's Dice (which is playable via single-card download). The only way to feel more like a pirate is to put on a puffy shirt and wear heavy eyeliner.







CRITICAL CONDITION

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

This summer's potential blockbusters sure aren't the first to be translated into game form. Here are our picks for the best and worst movie-based games on Nintendo systems from years gone by.

Thumbs Up

Batman Returns (Konami/SNES/1993)
Not all of Batman's games have been winners, but this beat-'em-up was one of the most polished brawlers around. The best part: grabbing two punks and slamming their heads together.

GoldenEye 007 (Nintendo/N64/1997)
Who cares if the film wasn't 007's finest hour? Nintendo and Rare's game tie-in was tops with N64 players. It proved just how good a multiplayer FPS could be on game consoles.

The Goonies II (Konami/NES/1987)
Picking up where the movie left off, The Goonies II put you in the role of Mikey as he attempted to rescue his fellow Goonies. The nonlinear adventure was reminiscent of Castlevania II: Simon's Quest.

Peter Jackson's King Kong: The Official Game of the Movie (Ubisoft/GCN/2005)
Michel Ancel (of Rayman and Beyond Good and Evil fame) took a break from his original titles to bring Peter Jackson's vision of King Kong to consoles. The resulting first-person/third-person hybrid was as ambitious as it was successful.

Super *Star Wars* (JVC/SNES/1992)
Remember when Luke braved lava pits in the Jawa Sandcrawler to rescue R2-D2? We don't either, but this game still ranks among the best *Star Wars* games ever produced.

Thumbs Down

Bad Boys: Miami Takedown (Crave/GCN/2004)
This by-the-numbers shooter was completely lacking in gameplay fundamentals. If you made the mistake of using a wall for cover, you'd spend 15 minutes trying to figure out how to step away from it. Bad, indeed.

Charlie's Angels (Ubisoft/GCN/2003)
The idea of the Angels going undercover at a bikini-modeling contest may have seemed like a good idea, but the game's low-polygon characters in skimpy outfits made it just plain creepy.

Friday the 13th (LJN/NES/1989)
Friday the 13th's adventure elements were ambitious, but their execution was more painful than a machete wound. It didn't help that Jason would distract you from your quest every 30 seconds.

Superman Returns (EA/DS/2006)
When Batman returned, it was awesome. When Superman returned . . . well, he shouldn't have bothered. Long load times, lame missions, and rhythm-game-like boss battles were worse than Kryptonite.

Total Recall (Acclaim/NES/1990)
Way before Arnold was the Governator, he got to be the virtual star of a game that was based around fighting midgets and hobos and boasted horrendous collision detection.

SHREK THE THIRD

THE OGRE'S FLATULENT FRACTURED FAIRY TALES CONTINUE.

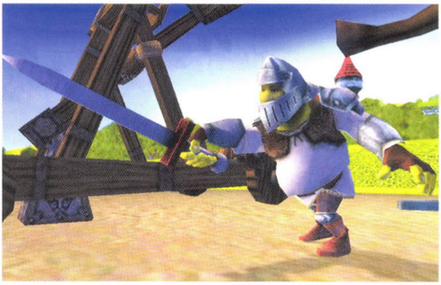
A sharp sword and sharper wit make this cat a real threat.

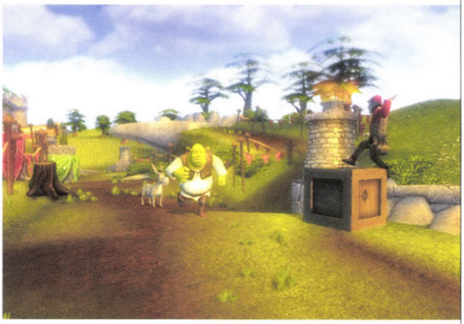
The Pitch:

If the popularity of the second *Shrek* film is any indicator, the third chapter in the series is a legitimate contender for highest-grossing movie of the year. The Wii adaptation covers the same ground as the film (with a few side battles in new areas) and offers cut-scenes that play like puppet shows, with the voice of John Cleese serving up wry narration. The DS game starts with the movie plot, but quickly journeys into new directions.

The Play:

Shrek has done everything from race karts to party hearty on Nintendo consoles, but movie-based adventuring is his specialty. The green, not-so-mean one is joined by Puss in Boots, Donkey, Princess Fiona, Sleeping Beauty, and the future King Arthur in a 20-level Wii movie-companion piece that's jam-packed with motion-controlled fighting. Remote swipes trigger basic punches and kicks while more-elaborate moves let you pull off character-specific attacks. Six multiplayer minigames round out the adventure. The DS title plays like an update of classic The Lost Vikings with Shrek, Arthur, and Puss in Boots working together toward a common goal.





HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX

THE HARRY POTTER SAGA CASTS ITS SPELL IN A WHOLE NEW WAY.

The Pitch:

Things take a darker turn in the fifth chapter of JK Rowling's megapopular saga. This time out, Harry must deal with strange premonitions, a wicked new instructor at Hogwarts, and the growing strength of the reborn Lord Voldemort. Spoiler: someone dies.

The Play:

The philosophy behind Order of the Phoenix is that you won't just play as Harry Potter—you'll *become* Harry Potter. As expected, the Wii version of the game will let you cast spells with simple movements of the remote, but the depth of the experience doesn't stop there. The developers have painstaking built the entirety of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry—including areas never shown in the films—and filled it with plenty to see and do. Do you want to just progress through the main story of Harry uniting the students of Hogwarts against dark magic, or take time to attend classes, accept side quests, or engage a classmate in a game of Wizard's Chess? In addition to Harry, you'll be able to play as other characters, such as Cho Chang and Sirius Black, at key points in the game. You'll also be able to venture outside the school for major events, like the climactic showdown at the Ministry of Magic. Order of the Phoenix is also coming to DS, which will allow you to use the touch screen to cast magic, and the microphone to help concoct potions.

TRANSFORMERS

TRANSFORM, ROLL OUT, KICK BUTT

The Pitch:

Updated from Hasbro's classic '80s toy line, Transformers brings the age-old conflict between the Autobots and the Decepticons to modern-day Earth in search of the AllSpark. When giant transforming robots fight, lots of things go boom. What more do you need?

The Play:

Both the Wii and DS versions of Transformers let you take control of the metal behemoths in free-roaming environments with mission-based gameplay. In the Wii version (developed by Traveller's Tales), you'll be able to choose either the Autobot side or the Decepticon side and use movie characters (like Bumblebee and Blackout) to play through a story that expands on the film's plot. Melee attacks, projectiles (which you'll unleash by pointing and shooting with the Wii remote), and environment-based weapons are at your disposal, along with the ability to transform to vehicle form at any time to make a quick escape or give pursuit.

DS owners have even more options. Show your allegiance with either the Autobot version or the Decepticon version of the game; each offers unique characters, missions, and environments. You'll also be able to scan more than 30 vehicle forms to assign to your customizable character, and engage in versus matches for up to four players.

SURF'S UP

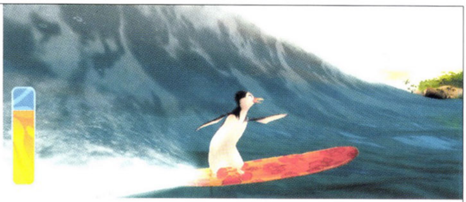
Ride the waves—penguin style.

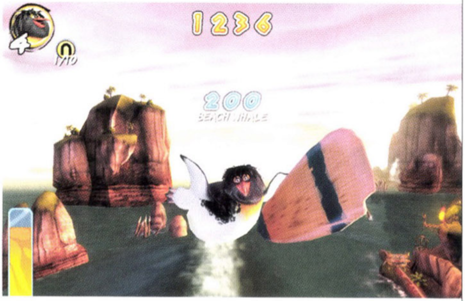
The Pitch:

Surf's Up might not be the first penguin movie to hit theaters in recent years, but it's the only one to combine penguins with a mockumentary about the high-stakes world of competitive surfing. Follow the trials of up-and-coming surfer Cody Maverick as he tries to make it to the big time.

The Play:

Although Surf's Up is technically a surfing game, it plays more like a water-based Mario Kart with some Tony Hawk-style grinding and extreme stunts thrown in. Players can choose from 10 characters including Cody, female penguin Lani, current champ Tank, the legendary Big Z, and Chicken Joe (yes, he is indeed a chicken), then challenge numerous surfing circuits. Once you hit a jump and catch big air, you'll get to use the unique features of the Wii and DS to pull off crazy stunts—on the Wii that means moving the remote and nunchuk to execute an assortment of tricks, and on DS you'll show your stuff by pressing icons on the touch screen. The more impressive your tricks, the more of a speed boost you'll get. However, when that's not enough you can also rely on power-ups strewn about the courses, like rockets that provide instant acceleration, and jars that act as obstacles. The game brings the big-screen experience home with actual movie clips and voice-overs from the film's cast.





RATATOUILLE

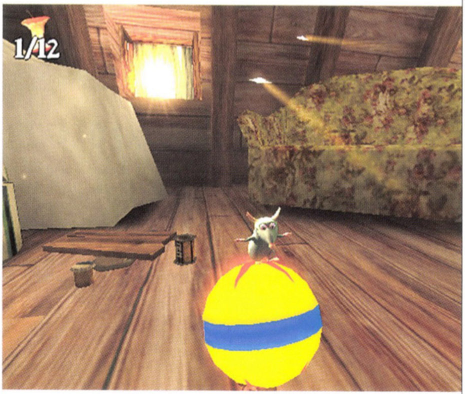
What, Me Scurry?

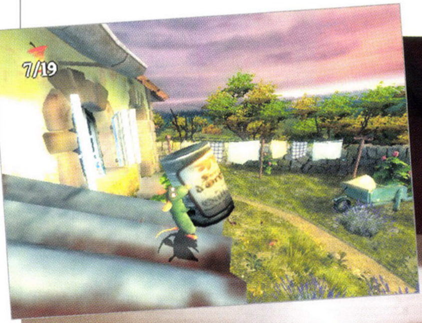
The Pitch:

The latest movie from Pixar stars a rat named Remy who's sick of scavenging for leftovers like common vermin. After he and his family relocate to Paris, he sets his sights on becoming a gourmet chef—and comical action ensues.

The Play:

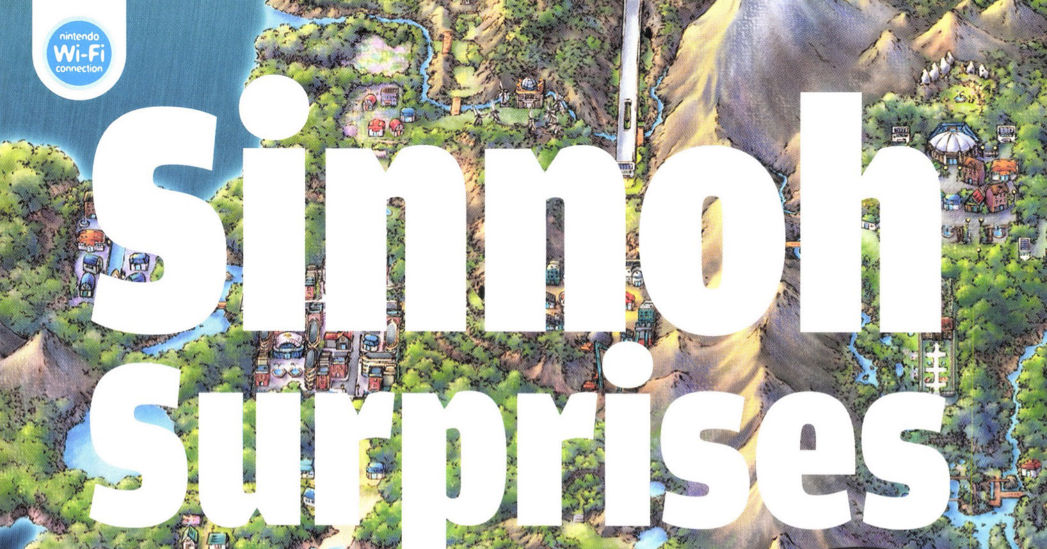
A platformer at its core, Ratatouille for Wii will have players running, jumping, climbing, and scurrying through six worlds and more than 20 missions, including some based on scenes that were cut from the film (like a marketplace level). In addition to genre staples like double-jumping and swinging from poles, Remy can use special rodent abilities—by swinging the Wii remote, you can use a swiping tail attack, and by activating Scent Vision you can identify useful objects and routes to get through the game's levels. Wii-exclusive sewer-slide stages will let you see Paris in a whole new light, while an assortment of dream worlds based on various food types (like a fruit world and a dessert world) will whet your appetite. Additionally, you can test your culinary skills with several motion-control-based cooking minigames—sort of like Cooking Mama with rats. Ratatouille is also coming to Nintendo GameCube, DS, and GBA.





This is one rat you'll want in the kitchen.

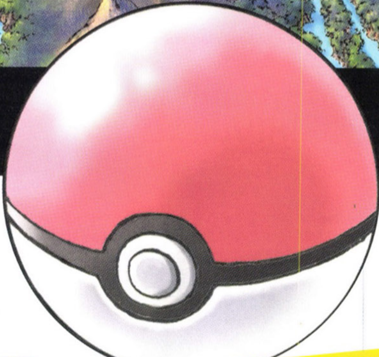
nintendo Wi-Fi connection



Sinnoh Surprises

Prepare to be astonished at the things you can do in the world of Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl.

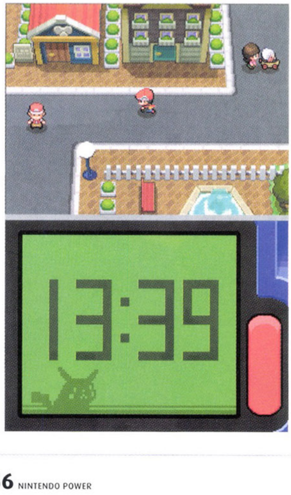
by Chris Shepperd

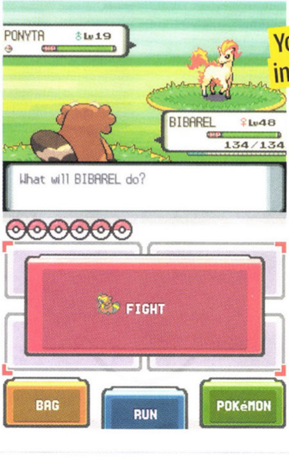


You'll need plenty of these to catch 'em a
in Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pea

The Next Generation of Pokémon

Whether you're new to the world of Pokémon or an experienced Pokémon Trainer, Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl offer something new, such as catching never-before-seen Pokémon, visiting The Underground, or battling via Wi-Fi. All around the Sinnoh region, you'll discover places to visit and things to do. This article will help you get acquainted with your new surroundings, and provide the essentials you need to kick your adventure off right.





What will BIBAREL do?

SHAMELESS PLUG FOR THE PLAYER'S GUIDE

You could spend days wandering around Sinnoh and still not uncover all its secrets. Not to fear—our Snorlax-sized Player's Guide will tell you everything you need to become the ultimate Trainer and the Pokémon League Champion.

visit www.nintendopower.com/guides

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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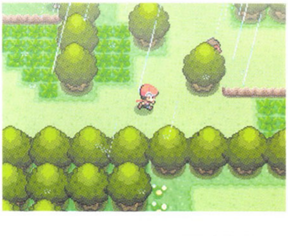
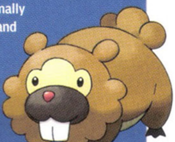
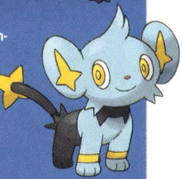
Welcome to the Sinnoh Region



When you begin your travels, the road is pretty smooth—some grassy fields and a few caves are all you have to deal with. But don't let your guard down; Sinnoh is a very dangerous place to explore. From rainy plains to arid sandstorms, from muggy swamps to frigid snow-filled canyons, Sinnoh features a diverse and treacherous combination of rugged terrains. Areas change, as well—you'll explore a deep chasm, and the next time you visit it a lake will have filled the gorge, for example. Adaptability is key—train a group of Pokémon that can help you under any situation.

Discover Over 100 New Pokémon



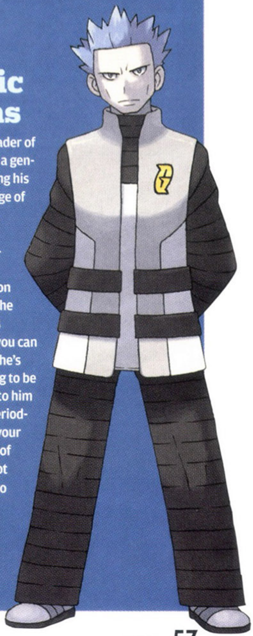


Just when you thought you finally recognized all the Pokémon and you knew your Corsola from your Cradily, Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl introduce a load of new inhabitants. Your adventure will be just beginning when you first discover the likes of Bidoof (top-right) and Shinx (bottom-right), but you'll have to explore every last corner of Sinnoh to find all the new Pokémon.

Get Connected Wirelessly

Battling, trading, Union Rooms, The Underground, Contests, the Battle Tower, Wi-Fi Connection, the Global Trade Station . . . the ways you can connect to other Trainers is unprecedented. That means there's no place to hide for trash-talking Trainers—with so many opportunities to test your Trainer skills, you'd better construct a team that can live up to all your big talk.

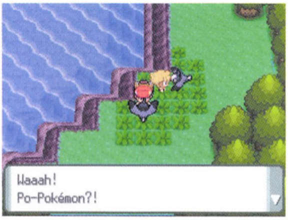
Galactic Villains



Meet Cyrus, the leader of Team Galactic and a generally evil guy. Using his immense knowledge of Pokémon folklore, Cyrus plans to unleash the devastating power of ancient Pokémon on Sinnoh. He keeps the details of his plans under wraps, but you can bet that whatever he's doing, it's not going to be good. You'll run into him and his minions periodically throughout your journey, and most of the time they're not just stopping you to have a chat—be ready to battle.

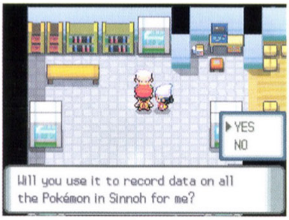
Prelude to Adventure

Your first errand is to meet your friend (and eventual rival) just outside of Twinleaf Town on the coast of Lake Verity. There you'll find Professor Rowan, an esteemed Pokémon researcher who doesn't have time to bother with a couple of kids out on a walk. He'll depart and leave his briefcase behind—how could you not look inside? The briefcase is a Pandora's box—it contains mystery, adventure, and danger in the form of three Pokémon. Choose one to begin your adventure, then be ready to test it in battle right away. After the battle, it's time to find the professor in Sandgem Town.



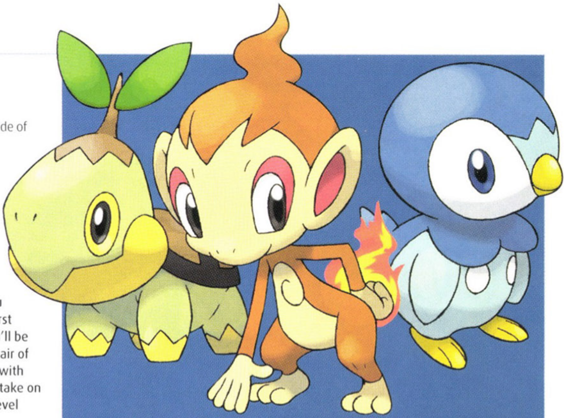
Waaah!
Po-Pokémon?!

As soon as you choose your first Pokémon, you'll be jumped by a pair of Starly. Join up with your friend to take on the two low-level Flying-types.



Will you use it to record data on all the Pokémon in Sinnoh for me?

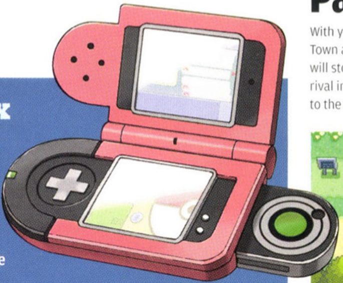
As you return from Lake Verity, Prof. Rowan will stop and ask for his briefcase back. After hearing your story, he'll let you keep the Pokémon you selected.



The New Starters

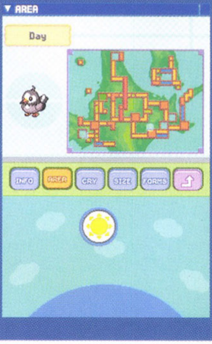
You'll have your pick from the trio of Grass-, Fire-, and Water-type Pokémon to kick off your adventure. Nurture your starting Pokémon carefully—it will become one of your strongest allies. You can't find the Pokémon you didn't select in the wild—you'll be able to acquire them only via trades.

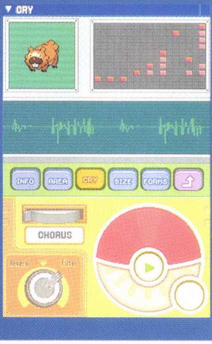
Pokémon	Type	Ability	Egg Group	Height	Weight
Turtwig	Grass	Overgrow	Monster / Grass	1'04"	22.5 lbs
Chimchar	Fire	Blaze	Field / Human-Like	1'08"	13.7 lbs
Piplup	Water	Torrent	Water 1 / Field	1'04"	11.5 lbs



The Sinnoh Pokédex

When you meet Prof. Rowan in Sandgem Town, he'll give you the Pokédex, which has long been standard issue for Pokémon Trainers—it keeps notes on every Pokémon you've seen and where you might encounter them again. The latest version improves on the original design by including a cool touch-screen interface and a time-specific Pokémon locator.

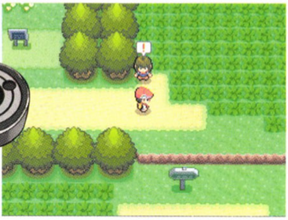


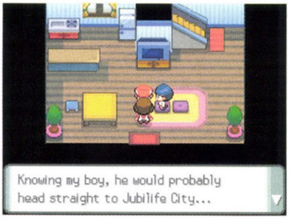


In addition to an easy-to-use Poké Ball-shaped scroll wheel and touch-screen day/night indicator, the Pokédex includes sound-modulation tools for the cries of the Pokémon. It's not essential strategically, but it's fun to mess around with.

Package Delivery

With your new Pokémon in hand, go back to Twinleaf Town and speak with your mother. Your rival's mom will stop by and ask you to deliver a package to your rival in Jubilife City. Be sure to rest before returning to the wild.





Knowing my boy, he would probably head straight to Jubilife City...

Talk to your mom before you leave; she'll restore all of your Pokémon to full health.

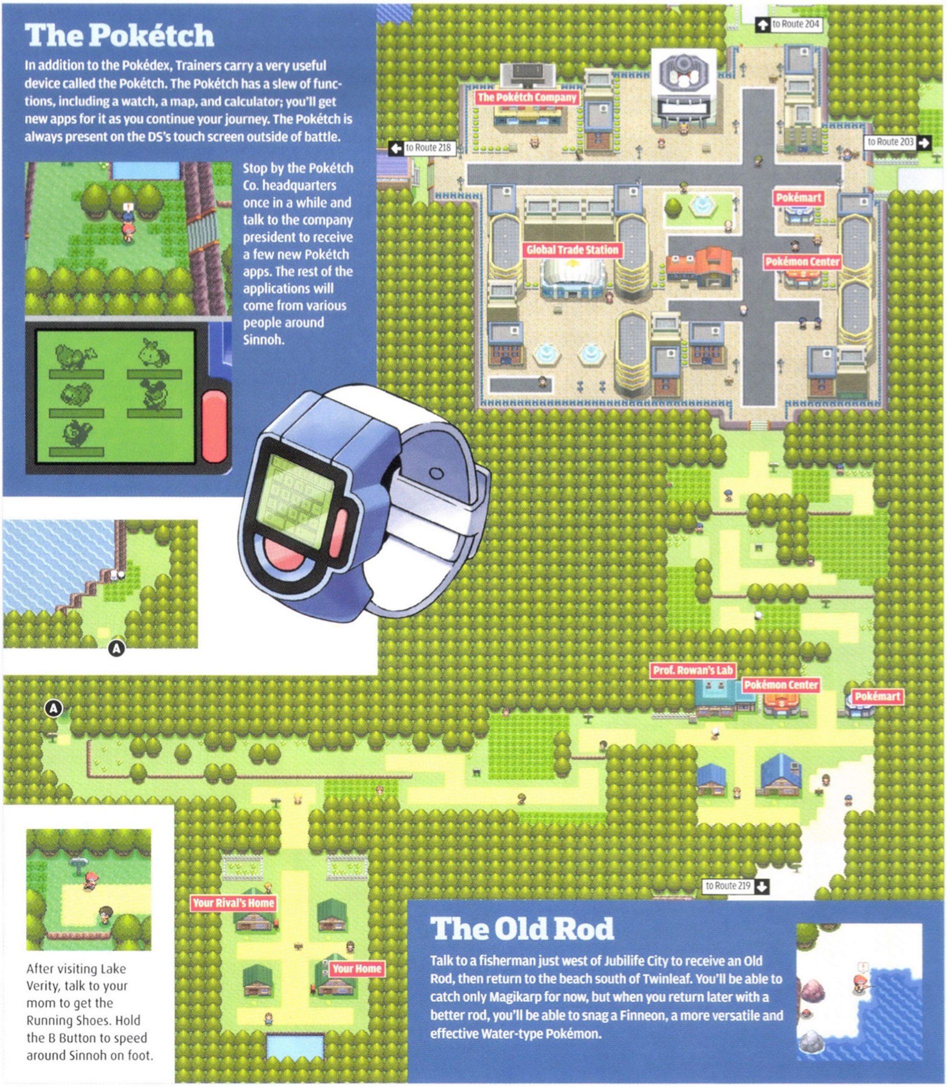
Jubilife City

The hustle and bustle of Jubilife City is a little overwhelming at first, but you'll soon get the hang of the place. When you first hit town, Prof. Rowan's assistant will suggest that you attend the Trainers' School, where your rival is already studying. The parcel you give him contains two Town Maps, one of which he'll give to you. Then collect tickets from the clowns in town to earn a Pokétch. Some of Jubilife City is off-limits to fresh-faced Trainers—stop by later to see the city's remaining

Huh?
You've got something for me?

Does a Pokémon grow by defeating others and gaining Exp. Points?

▸YES
NO


to Route 204
The Pokétch Company
to Route 218
to Route 203
Pokémart
Global Trade Station
Pokémon Center
A
A
Prof. Rowan's Lab
Pokémon Center
Pokémart
to Route 219
Your Rival's Home
Your Home

The Pokétch

In addition to the Pokédex, Trainers carry a very useful device called the Pokétch. The Pokétch has a slew of functions, including a watch, a map, and calculator; you'll get new apps for it as you continue your journey. The Pokétch is always present on the DS's touch screen outside of battle.

Stop by the Pokétch Co. headquarters once in a while and talk to the company president to receive a few new Pokétch apps. The rest of the applications will come from various people around Sinnoh.

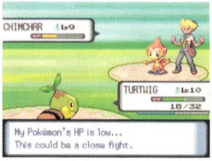
After visiting Lake Verity, talk to your mom to get the Running Shoes. Hold the B Button to speed around Sinnoh on foot.

The Old Rod

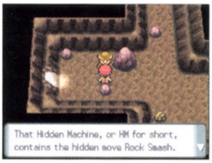
Talk to a fisherman just west of Jubilife City to receive an Old Rod, then return to the beach south of Twinleaf. You'll be able to catch only Magikarp for now, but when you return later with a better rod, you'll be able to snag a Finneon, a more versatile and effective Water-type Pokémon.

East to Oreburgh City

Once you've taken care of business in Jubilife City, head east across Route 203 toward the cave known as Oreburgh Gate. Your rival will ask for a battle before you can enter the cave. After the fight, make a bee-line through the subterranean passage to Oreburgh City, ignoring the northern branch of the tunnel.

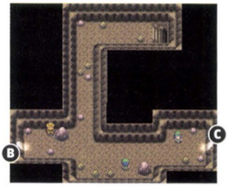


My Pokémon's HP is low... This could be a close fight.



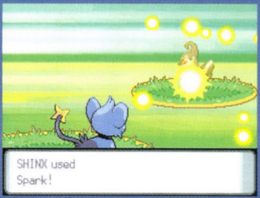
That Hidden Machine, or HM for short, contains the hidden move Rock Smash.

Once you've taught (HM06) Rock Smash to a Pokémon and you've earned Oreburgh City's Gym Badge, return to Oreburgh Gate. Its depths contain both exotic Pokémon and valuable treasures.



New Move Types

In previous Pokémon games, some types of moves (such as Fighting-type and Bug-type moves) were physical attacks, whereas other types of moves (such as Water-type and Ice-type moves) were special attacks. The rules have changed; physical and special attacks are no longer tied to type. The change adds new flexibility for Trainers who want to use more Pokémon with stats that skew it toward using either special or physical attacks.

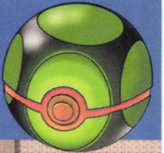


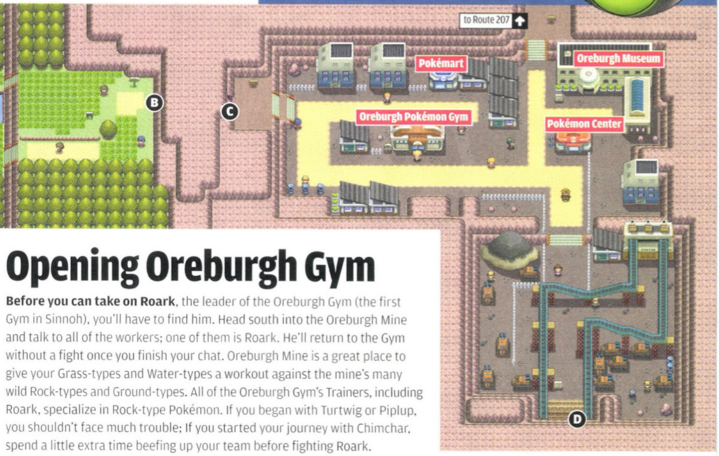
SHINX used Spark!

The Attack stat of Shinx's evolved forms increases faster than the Special Attack stat. Now that some electric-type attacks like Spark and Thunder Fang are physical, a high-attack Pokémon like Shinx can really shine.

New Poké Balls

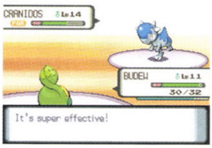
Check Pokémarts for new Poké Balls such as the Heal Ball and the Dusk Ball. The Heal Ball will instantly restore full health to the Pokémon you caught and the Dusk Ball is designed to help snag Pokémon at night or in caves.





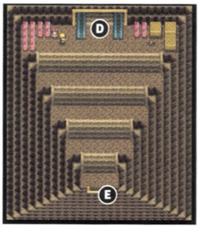
Opening Oreburgh Gym

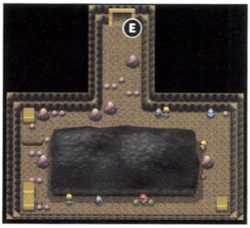
Before you can take on Roark, the leader of the Oreburgh Gym (the first Gym in Sinnoh), you'll have to find him. Head south into the Oreburgh Mine and talk to all of the workers; one of them is Roark. He'll return to the Gym without a fight once you finish your chat. Oreburgh Mine is a great place to give your Grass-types and Water-types a workout against the mine's many wild Rock-types and Ground-types. All of the Oreburgh Gym's Trainers, including Roark, specialize in Rock-type Pokémon. If you began with Turtwig or Piplup, you shouldn't face much trouble; If you started your journey with Chimchar, spend a little extra time beefing up your team before fighting Roark.



It's super effective!

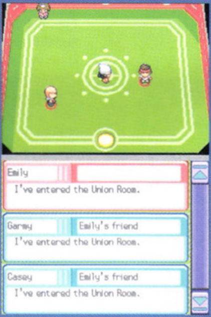
Catch and raise a Grass/Poison-type Budew to confront Roark's Rock-type Cranidos with a type advantage.





Wireless vs. Wi-Fi

The multiplayer features of the Pokémon Center are separated by how you want to connect to other Trainers. If you're hooking up via local wireless, head upstairs and speak to the receptionists—they'll guide you toward a Union Room or link you to another Trainer for instant battling. Go into the Pokémon Center's basement to participate in all Wi-Fi activities. The first time you visit the basement, talk to the receptionist on the right to pick up the Pal Pad; you'll need it to record the friend codes of other Trainers.



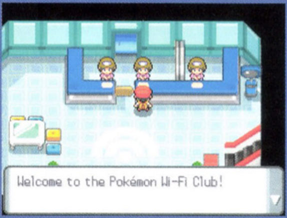
Emily
I've entered the Union Room.

Garmy Emily's friend
I've entered the Union Room.

Casey Emily's friend
I've entered the Union Room.

The Pokémon Center

Pokémon veterans will notice a few renovations to the Pokémon Center, but the building still performs its normal duties, such as healing Pokémon, accessing the Pokémon-storage PC, and communicating with other Trainers. The new basement lets you meet up with Trainers via Wi-Fi.

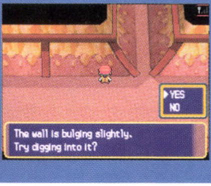


Welcome to the Pokémon Wi-Fi Club!

Once you get the Pal Pad from the Pokémon Center's basement receptionist, swap your friend code with other Trainers. Then meet up with them to battle or trade via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.

The Underground

A vast network of tunnels under Sinnoh awaits your investigation. Head into The Underground to establish your Secret Base, dig for rare treasures (such as Fossils you can take to the Oreburgh City Museum), and meet up wirelessly with other spelunkers.



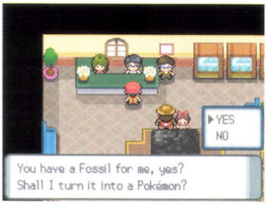
The wall is bulging slightly.
Try digging into it?

Looking Forward

Even after you've beaten Roark and earned your first Gym badge, your adventure has just begun. You'll soon be heading toward Hearthome City, home of the Pokémon Super Contests. Don't forget what you've seen and done in Oreburgh City, however—you journey will lead you back to it in the future.

Exchange Fossils at the Oreburgh City Museum

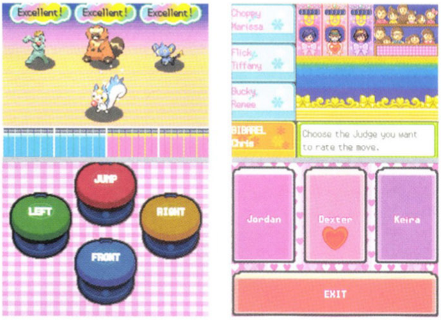
The curators in Oreburgh City Museum wont be of much service when you first meet them, but return after you've spent some time in the Underground. If you've managed to dig up any Fossils, the museum employees will revive them into rare Pokémon swiftly and free of charge.



You have a Fossil for me, yes?
Shall I turn it into a Pokémon?

Participate in Pokémon Super Contests

Pokémon Diamond and Pearl's contests feature new events that incorporate the DS touch screen in several ways, including a rhythm game. The Contest Moves event has also been streamlined to make contests much more fun.

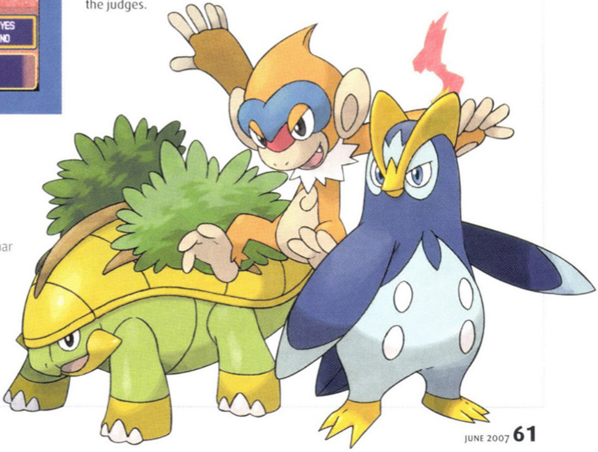


Choose the Judge you want to rate the move.

Find ribbons around Sinnoh with which to adorn your Pokémon before contests; the fancier your Pokémon looks, the more points it will earn in front of the judges.

Evolution Theory

The evolved forms of your starter Pokémon are quite strong. Chimchar evolves into Monferno at Level 14, changing into a Fire/Fighting-type Pokémon. Monferno will also learn Mach Punch at Level 14—if you began your journey with Chimchar and you're having trouble taking down Roark, this Fighting-type move should help immensely. Piplup evolves into Prinplup at Level 16 and Turtwig evolves into Grotle at Level 18, but neither of these Pokémon will change their type until they evolve again much later in your adventure.



WAY OUT THERE

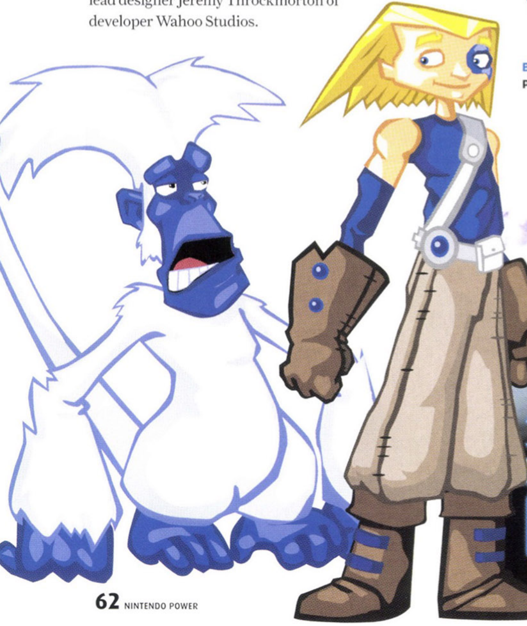
The depths of space play host to bizarre characters and wacky money-making antics in Namco Bandai's Space Station Tycoon for Wii.

By Chris Hoffman

When you hear the word "tycoon," the first thing that comes to mind might be some poorly coifed blowhard businessman in a suit and tie behind his desk on the top floor of a skyscraper. But that's certainly not the emphasis of Space Station Tycoon, a comedic simulation game for Wii in which you'll take entrepreneur Shawn and his monkey pal Tam from obscurity to the top of the intergalactic business heap. As you build up your chain of resortlike space stations, you'll fight space pirates, encounter numerous animal-inspired alien races, clear asteroid fields, fend off unscrupulous competitors, and more while managing your resources and keeping visitors happy. To say that Space Station Tycoon's definitely not your typical simulation game is an understatement. To find out where all the wackiness comes from—and where in the galaxy it's going—we checked in with project manager Brent Fox and lead designer Jeremy Throckmorton of developer Wahoo Studios.

JEREMY THROCKMORTON | **LEAD DESIGNER**

BRENT FOX | **PROJECT MANAGER**



Nintendo Power: Normally you don't associate outer space, big money, and humor with one another, but those are all parts of Space Station Tycoon. How did these disparate elements come together to form one game?

Brent Fox: It must just be the way our minds work. Outer space, big money and humor seem to fit together perfectly. We started with the idea of managing a space station. When we began to imagine what kind of visitors would appear, things started getting a little crazy. Our imaginations ran wild.

In addition to the things you have mentioned, the game has a tropical theme that includes pirates. Everyone loves pirates. What game would be complete without robot pirates? Everything is tied together neatly with an entertaining story that is really funny.

NP: So what is the plot? Who, exactly, are Shawn and Tam, and why are they out to make some dough?

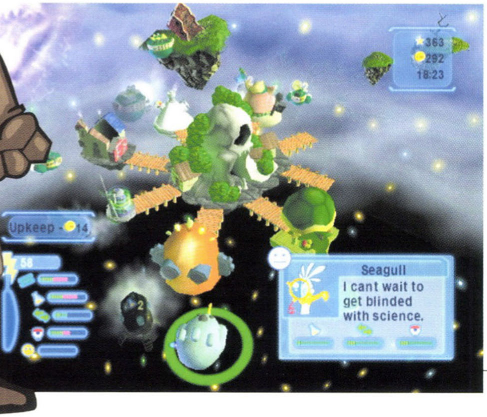
Jeremy Throckmorton: Shawn's always had big dreams and isn't exactly the kind of person to let little things like reality, rationality, reason, or any other words that start with *R* get in his way. Tam, Shawn's snarky sidekick (though don't let him hear you call him "sidekick"), has been palling around with our blonde businessman ever since he was abandoned by his parents while at Monkey-Shine Camp. The game follows the exploits of our dynamic duo as they set up a financial empire to rival anyone and everyone. Shawn wants it all, and he's ready and willing to do all manner of odd jobs to get it.

Why did Shawn decide to focus his ambitions on space-station management? It must be something in his blood, because he's never wanted anything else.

NP: What inspired the look of the game, especially the crazy character designs? Particularly Shawn—he doesn't look like much of a tycoon.

BF: We did a lot of concept work. We tested a lot of themes. We were looking for a game that really looked "fun." We had previously made Outpost Kaloki X for Xbox Live Arcade. The look we created for that game was well-received and served as a great reference.

We wanted a game with memorable characters and lively environments. Wouldn't most gamers rather play as our character Shawn than assume the role of a character that you might envision with the



Seagull
I cant wait to get blinded with science.

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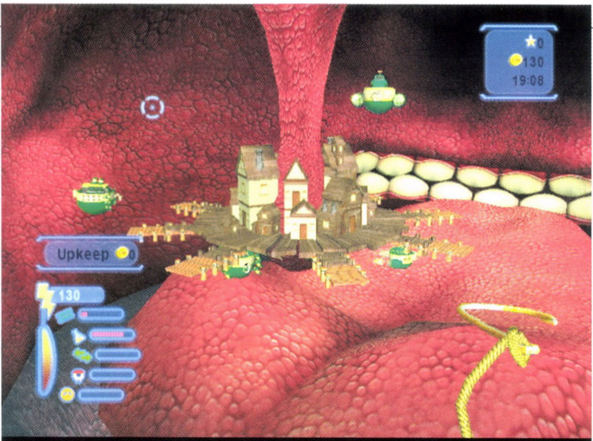


Space Station Tycoon will let spacefaring entrepreneurs manage their stations in some of the most unique locales in the galaxy, including underwater and, yes, on a space whale's giant uvula.

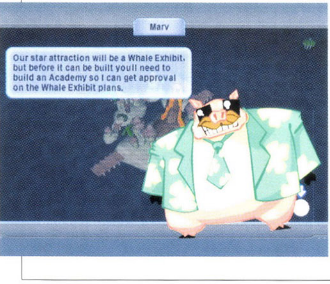
title of "tycoon"? The end product is a result of Jeremy's wacky story concepts coupled with our artist's crazy ideas. I have to give a lot of credit for the look of the game to the lead concept artist, whose name is coincidentally also Shawn.

NP: What attracted you to the Wii as the game's primary platform?

JT: We're huge fans of Nintendo; they've always been able to focus on fun in games above anything else. The Wii presented us with an opportunity to take our brand of gameplay in a direction we couldn't go on another platform. This goes beyond the absolutely cool controller, too. The wide install base lets us reach an audience that we otherwise wouldn't have access to on a console.

NP: How will the game take advantage of Wii's controls? Does it use the nunchuk?

JT: We designed the game to be playable with the remote only. All you need to play is one hand and a couple of buttons. Space Station Tycoon is meant to be a game you can play with anyone: your mom, dad, grandparents, or your talking monkey, if you've got one. We have optional controls mapped to the nunchuck for players that want to exercise extra control over the camera or some other features of the game. At this point we are still finalizing the features of that control.



Our star attraction will be a Whale Exhibit, but before it can be built youll need to build an Academy so I can get approval on the Whale Exhibit plans.

NP: How do you actually progress through the game?

JT: Each location or level on the galactic map in Space Station Tycoon has an entry fee in tokens. Tokens are earned by completing various tasks in the individual levels, and you aren't going to get all the tokens the first time you set up shop in a location. As you explore the galactic map and complete levels you are presented with more options for where to go. It's up to the player to decide where to go and when.

NP: What are some of the most interesting ways to earn money?

JT: Some of the characters in our universe have rather odd tastes or desires. If the most interesting ways of earning money don't spring from their requests, I don't know where they would come from. One character has gone so far as to set up a charitable fund for station managers who allow his son to use the facilities without charging. Another character tasks you to prove the value of relaxation over constant, mind-numbing labor, and blows up expansions on your station if you don't.

NP: Are all the activities seamless or do they play out via minigames?

JT: Minigames are something we've actively avoided during development of Space Station Tycoon. If a feature didn't mesh in with the rest of the game, we cut it. Players should be involved with the world at all times, and if you happen to find yourself playing pool in order to seal a black hole with an enormous eight-ball, you'll do it using the same mechanics you've been using to direct visitors to their destination, or to clear an asteroid field so you can expand your station.

NP: Do you get to multitask and manage multiple space stations at once?

JT: Players can own up to 60 stations at one time. If you have a desire to manage multiple stations while getting attacked by pirates, trying to meet the needs of ghost shoppers, fending off customer-repelling nerds, battling rival stations, and sealing black holes, you are either one of the world's greatest minds or in need of mental counseling.

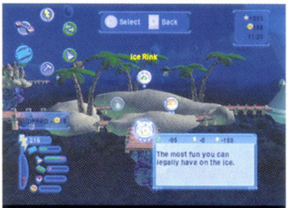
When you are managing a level, we put all other stations on hold. You can leave a station and come back to it later in your travels. You might want to collect some tokens you missed the first time, pick up an item you couldn't get before, or just build the station into all it can be.

NP: What do all those crazy meters in the lower-left corner of the screen represent, and what's their purpose in the game?

JT: The meters let you know a couple of things, but their primary purpose is to let you know what visitors want, and how well you are meeting those needs. The vertical bar on the side tells you how much power you are generating as well as how much you are using. The upkeep box up top lets you know how much cash it's taking to run your station at the given point in time.

NP: What are some of the funniest/most bizarre scenarios players will encounter while playing the game?

JT: I don't want to give too much away, so I'll just mention one of my favorite bits from the early part of the game. After some research involving pheromones goes horribly wrong, Shawn, Tam, and all the visitors to Fish Berry Mountain are swallowed by a giant space whale. While trying to figure out how to get out of the behemoth, the player builds a city hanging from the gigantic uvula of their captor. Getting out proves to be messy.



The most fun you can legally have on the ice.

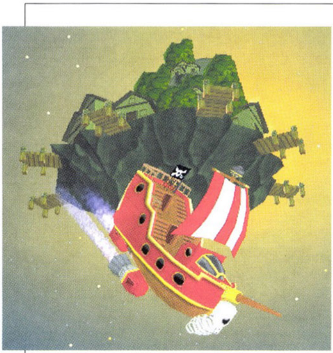
By purchasing various station upgrades, you'll keep visitors happy and maximize your profits.

NP: What are your favorite non-playable characters?

BF: It is so hard to pick a favorite. We tossed out any character that wasn't great. It's a little like making me pick a favorite child from my family. That said, Voodoo Chicken, the hippie seahorse, and several of the pigs make me smile just by looking at them. The funny thing is that everyone who has gotten to know the characters will give you a different answer.

NP: The game seems very different from other titles in the marketplace, and especially from other Wii games. What are you trying to achieve with the game, and who do you hope it will appeal to?

JT: Thanks for the compliment! We want to give players an experience they can't get anywhere else, and to give them a new experience on the Wii. We hope it appeals to everyone who loves to play games, and to those who are just learning to love games.



NP: How did Wahoo's previous titles help pave the way for Space Station Tycoon?
BF: Obviously the success of Outpost Kaloki X helped prove that this kind of game is appealing on a game console. In addition, the humor in Cloning Clyde has gained us a big fan base. Fortunately, Namco Bandai played these games and believed that we could use these ingredients to create the prefect recipe for a fun game. This time we used the Wii remote to mix it all together.

NP: Did you bring the project to Namco or did they come to you? How has the collaborative process worked out during the game's development?
BF: We had a friend at Namco Bandai that played some of our games. After talking with us, he let the right guys know that we might be interested in finding a partner for our next game. After a lot of phone calls and discussion we both decided to move forward.

We have been working on this project for a long time. Namco Bandai has proven to be a great partner. They have helped us a lot. One of the reasons they decided to make this game with Wahoo is that they believed in our ability to make a great game. They certainly have had a big impact on the design but we also feel that they have given us a lot of creative freedom. I've worked with a lot of game publishers in the past. Namco has honestly been one of the best to work with.

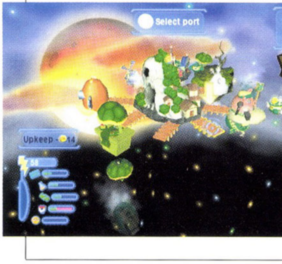
NP: What kind of an influence did other tycoon-type games have on this title? For that matter, were there any other games or media that influenced the game?
JT: I always hate trying to answer a question like this because there are so many things that influence us when developing a game, and those influences often go beyond other games or even media in general. Railroad Tycoon was an influence to be sure, and probably the biggest in the tycoon genre. Other things that I was personally influenced by were The Count of Monte Cristo, Dungeons & Dragons, Tinker Toys, and Warcraft.

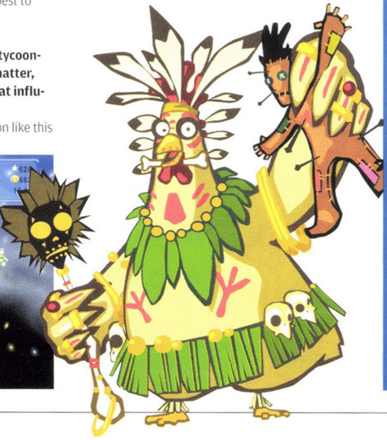
NP: How will the party mode and co-op mode work?
JT: Co-op mode is integrated seamlessly with the single-player experience. Your friend can simply pick up a second remote and join your game. We've got the interface up and running for two simultaneous players, but are continuing to work out some of the details regarding balance and such. It's shaping up nicely to be a unique gameplay experience. We aren't quite ready to talk about the specifics of party mode.

NP: Do you have any plans to use WiiConnect24 in the game?
BF: We love this stuff! We have all kinds of ideas how to take advantage of these Wii features. Unfortunately we haven't found the perfect fit to meet the parameters of this game. However, we plan on taking advantage of the WiiConnect24 features in future titles.

NP: Do you think this game will be a good tutorial on how to become a tycoon in real life?
BF: You bet it will! The next time you have the opportunity to manage a space station and fend off robot pirates, you will know exactly what to do. Your gravity-well manipulation and explosive-mine-throwing skills will come in handy. Money and power will be yours.

NP: Any parting thoughts you'd care to share about Space Station Tycoon?
BF: Space Station Tycoon is going to give players something they haven't experienced before. This game is unlike any game you've ever played with the word *Tycoon* in it. Sure, you can build stuff and earn money, but you can also fight off pirate attacks, play pong with asteroids, rip apart huge robotic death ships and beat them with their own debris, and interact with a large and colorful cast of out-of-this-world characters.

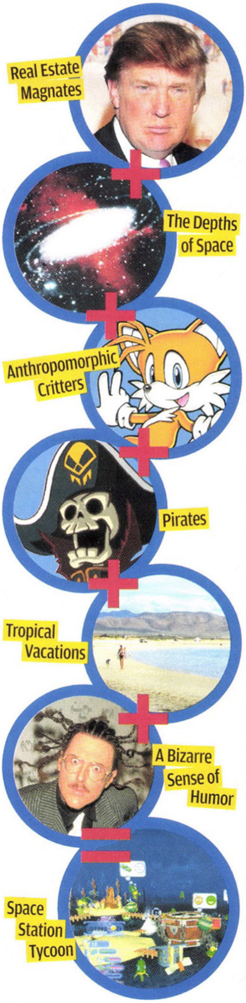




DEAL MAKER

Fusion Reaction

Space Station Tycoon might seem like the work of stark-raving-mad programmers, but as the following scientifically proven formula demonstrates, it actually makes completely logical sense.



WHAT'S WORSE THEN DETENTION?
HAVING TO SAVE THE WORLD...
ALONE
PLAY THROUGH STORY MODE AS DJ AND PANDORA WITH 2 PLAYER CO-OPERATIVE PLAY
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NINTENDO POWER

PLAYER'
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SWEEPSTAKES
June 2007

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Five winners will receive a Wii so they can create their own Miis. They'll also win a wardrobe of 10 shirts emblazoned with Mii creations of their own design. Plus they'll receive a copy of Wii Play, for even more Mii fun.

Wii
Wii Sports
Wii Play
Bonus!

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20 WINNERS!

With their own copy of Wii Play, 20 winners will have everything

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Bonus!
Wii
Wii Play

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EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Mild Cartoon Violence

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Pump Up Your PIXLS

You'll never walk alone in **Super Paper Mario**, thanks to your posse of 2-D toughs. Check out our Pixl pointers to make the most of your new, flat friends.

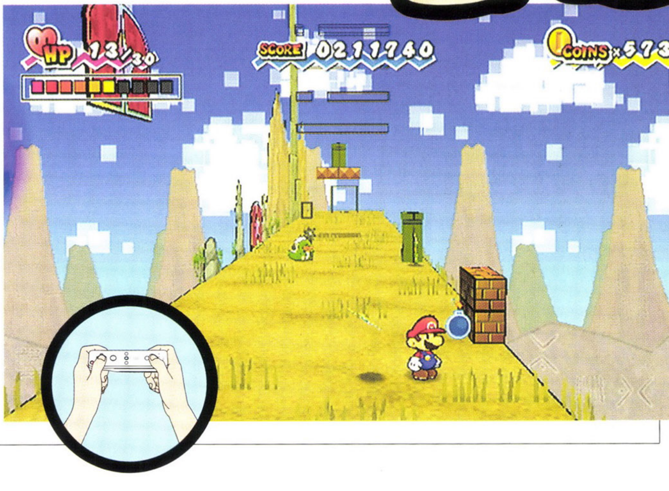
By Drew Williams

Who needs power-ups when you've got friends? Well, you do—at least during some of the tough boss battles. The rest of the time, you can usually squeak by on Pixl power alone. Many puzzles force you to employ specific Pixls, but the strange creatures have plenty of practical applications elsewhere in the game. Just follow our handy guide, and you'll always use the right Pixl for the right job.

SHAMELESS PLUG FOR THE PLAYER'S GUIDE

For more help, pick up our far-handier guide: The Official Nintendo Player's Guide for Super Paper Mario.

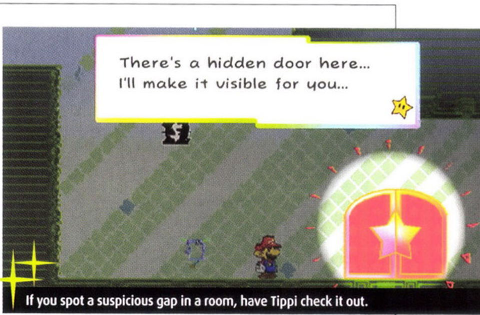
visit www.nintendopower.com/guides



CHAPTER 1-1

Tippi

Primary talent: Providing information about objects and enemies.
Secret talent: Revealing hidden objects. (Okay, it isn't much of a secret, but you'll often forget to use this ability.)
Best used . . . when there's a suspiciously empty room.



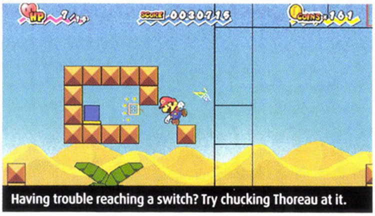
There's a hidden door here...
I'll make it visible for you...

If you spot a suspicious gap in a room, have Tippi check it out.

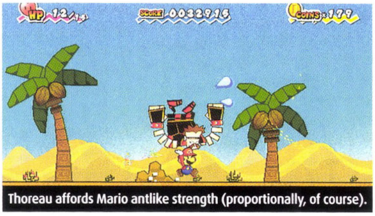
CHAPTER 1-2

Thoreau

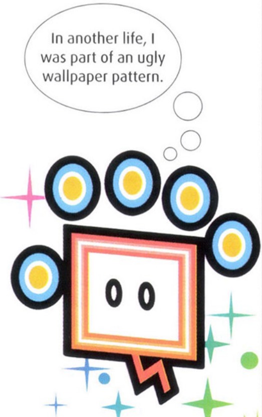
Primary talent: Grabbing and throwing enemies and objects.
Secret talents: Activating ! Switches and ! Blocks. Picking up and throwing huge enemies, like Brobot.
Best used . . . in certain boss battles. Thoreau is essential in your multiple encounters with O'Chunks—all you need to do is toss the boss to disorient him, then hop on his head until he comes to his senses. In the battle against Francis in Chapter 3, you should toss the lizard then burn him with Bowser's flame breath before he lands.



Having trouble reaching a switch? Try chucking Thoreau at it.



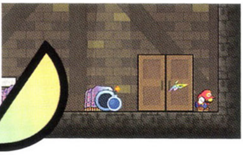
Thoreau affords Mario antlike strength (proportionally, of course).

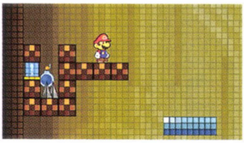

In another life, I was part of an ugly wallpaper pattern.

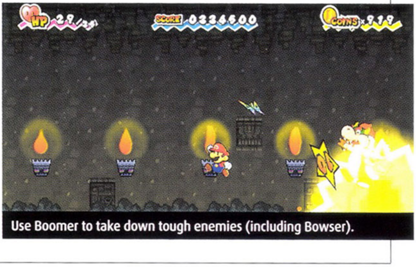
CHAPTER 2-1

Boomer

Primary talents: Blasting openings in cracked walls. Hurting tough enemies.
Secret talents: Activating switches in hard-to-reach nooks. Providing indigestible food for Shlurps.
Best used . . . when you want a delayed reaction. You have the option of detonating Boomer immediately, but he'll wait for his fuse to burn down if you leave him to his own devices. The delay allows you to get away from dangerous enemies, or perhaps through a doorway that will be blocked after you activate a switch.







Use Boomer to take down tough enemies (including Bowser).

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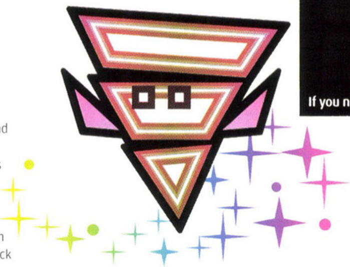
CHAPTER 2-3

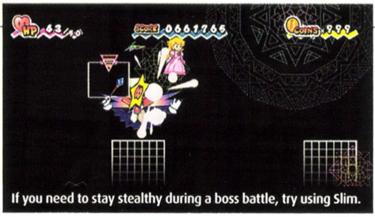
Slim

Primary talent: Flipping your playable character into 1-D, making you invisible and invulnerable.

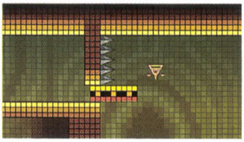
Secret talent: Stealth attacks during boss battles.

Best used . . . when you want to stay healthy during battles. Slim is especially useful during the final boss battle—you can lie in wait above Mr. L/Dimentio, then attack when the boss is vulnerable beneath you.





If you need to stay stealthy during a boss battle, try using Slim.



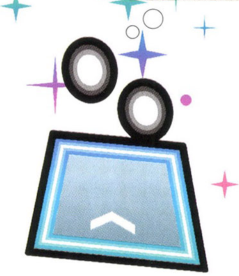
CHAPTER 3-2

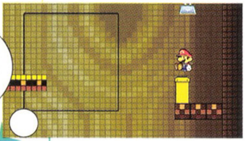
Thudley

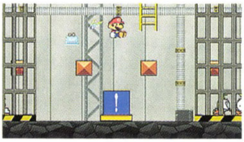
Primary talent: Slamming columns and large switches.

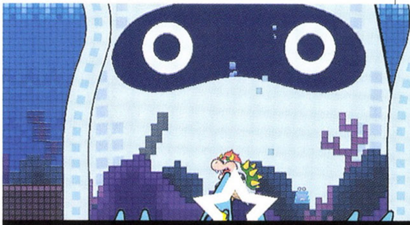
Secret talents: Hurting large enemies. Flipping small enemies onto their backs. Knocking objects loose from walls.

Best used . . . for slamming columns and large switches. Thudley is far more difficult to use in battle than, say, Cudge, so you should probably activate the weighty Pixl only when his slamming ability is required to solve a puzzle.


I'm saving to have my eyes surgically re-aligned.







Thudley is effective when fighting Big Blooper.

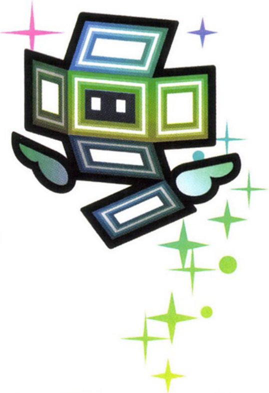
CHAPTER 3-4

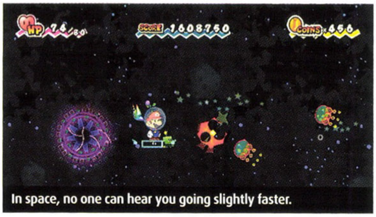
Carrie

Primary talent: Moving playable characters over spikes.

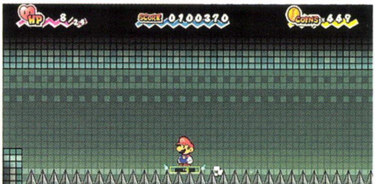
Secret talents: Slightly faster walking speed. Appreciably faster space flight.

Best used . . . when you fly through space. Carrie provides a nice boost when you need to blast your way through the asteroids in Chapter 4. For faster walking, Dashell is far more effective than Carrie.





In space, no one can hear you going slightly faster.



Carrie offers a smooth ride—even over spikes!

AFTER CHAPTER 3 (Optional)

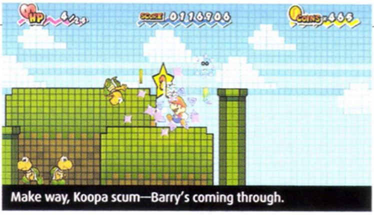
Barry

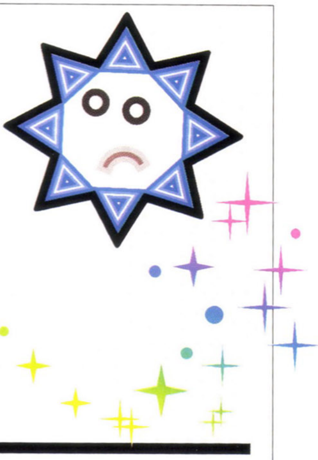
Primary talent: Using a spinning force field to protect playable characters and hurt enemies.

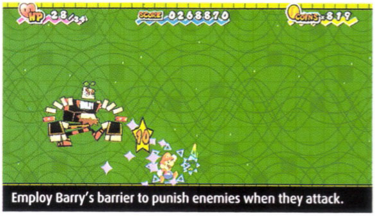
Secret talent: Bouncing energy attacks back at enemies.

Best used . . . in the Sammer Guy Tournament. If your timing is good, Barry can tear through opponents and keep you healthy over the long haul. He can also repel those annoying energy attacks.

Found . . . behind a bush in Chapter 3-1. You must defeat Francis at the end of Chapter 3-4, then return to Chapter 3-1 before Barry will join your party.


Make way, Koopa scum—Barry's coming through.




Employ Barry's barrier to punish enemies when they attack.

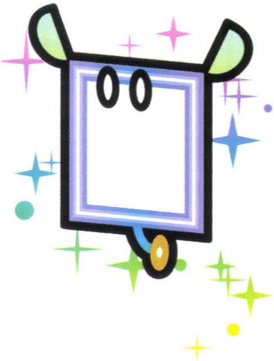
CHAPTER 4-2

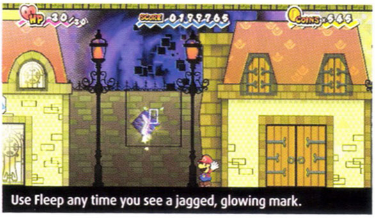
Fleep

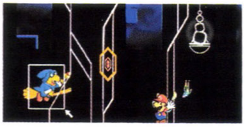
Primary talent: Revealing hidden objects by flipping 2-D covers and objects in front of them.

Secret talent: Confusing some enemies.

Best used . . . to find treasure scattered throughout the game. Buy each map from Flamm in Flopside, then use Fleep to flip the secret cover over the treasure in the spot indicated on the map. Don't get flummoxed; it may require some trial and error.




Use Fleep any time you see a jagged, glowing mark.



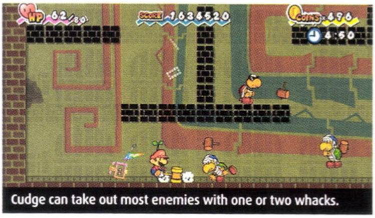
CHAPTER 5-2

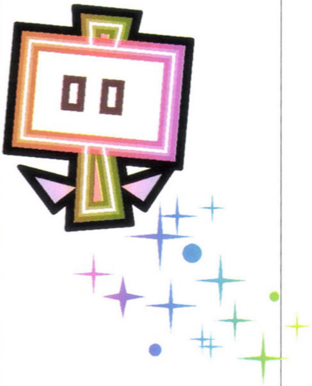
Cudge

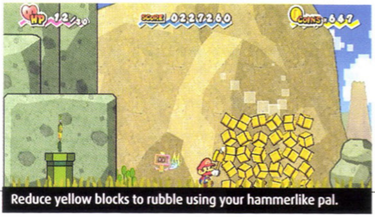
Primary talent: Smashing big yellow blocks into tiny pieces.

Secret talent: Whaling on enemies.

Best used . . . in the Pit of 100 Trials. You may need to switch to Barry or Boomer occasionally, but Cudge's skull-busting power is your ticket to the bottom of the pit.


Cudge can take out most enemies with one or two whacks.

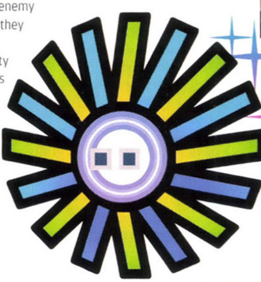


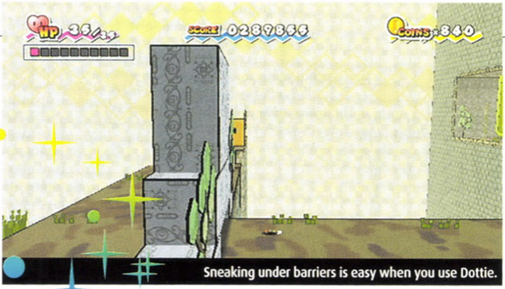

Reduce yellow blocks to rubble using your hammerlike pal.

CHAPTER 5-4

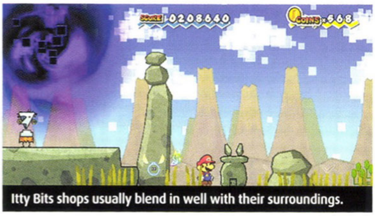
Dottie

Primary talent: Shrinking playable characters to very small size.
Secret talent: Avoiding enemy confrontations (because they can't see you).
Best used . . . to enter Itty Bits shops, the tiny stores that pop up throughout the game. The tiny shopkeepers carry many items you won't find in the Flipside and Flopside stores.





Sneaking under barriers is easy when you use Dottie.



Itty Bits shops usually blend in well with their surroundings.

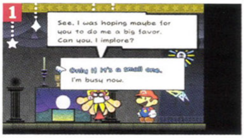
AFTER CHAPTER 5 (Optional)

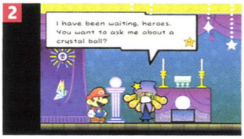
Piccolo

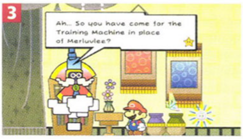
Primary talent: Making musical noises that trigger in-game events.
Secret talent: Curing some status injuries.
Best used . . . to defeat the three annoying Underchomps in Chapter 7-2's turn-based, retro RPG battle.
Found . . . in the Random House in Flopside. Of course, it isn't simple to get *inside* the Random House.

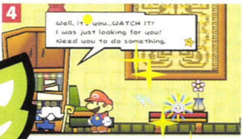
Follow these steps:

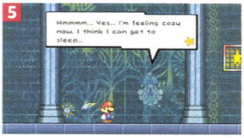
1. Visit Merlee after placing the sixth Pure Heart. Hop over the crystal ball to hear about her problems, then offer to help.
2. Visit Merluvlee in Flipside to learn about the next stage of the miniquest.
3. Visit Bestovious in Chapter 1-1 for a new errand.
4. Visit Watchitt in Chapter 1-2 for a piece of paper.
5. Visit Merlumina in Chapter 1-4. Have her sign the paper.
6. Retrace your steps.
7. Eventually you'll get back to Merluvlee, who will give you a crystal ball. Take the crystal ball to Merlee, and she'll give you the key to the Random House.

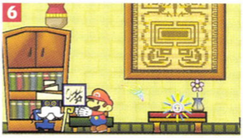

1
See. I was hoping maybe for you to do me a big favor. Can you, I implore?
Only if it's a small one.
I'm busy now.


2
I have been waiting, heroes. You want to ask me about a crystal ball?


3
Ah... So you have come for the Training Machine in place of Merluvlee?


4
Well, it's you...WATCH IT! I was just looking for you! Need you to do something.


5
Hmmmm... Yes... I'm feeling cozy now. I think I can get to sleep...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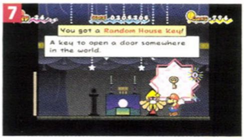
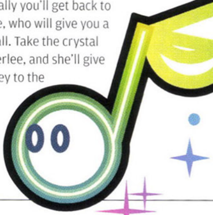
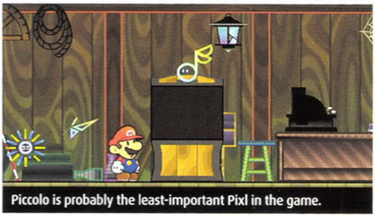

7
You got a Random House Key!
A key to open a door somewhere in the world.




Piccolo is probably the least-important Pixl in the game.

PIT OF 100 TRIALS
(Optional)

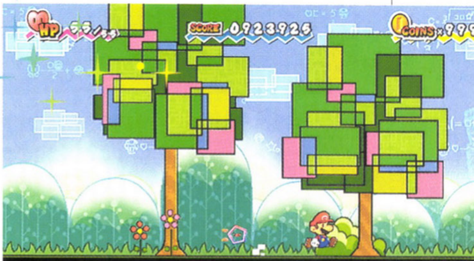
Dashell

Primary talent: Making playable characters go really fast.

Secret talent: Isn't going really fast good enough for you? Sheesh.

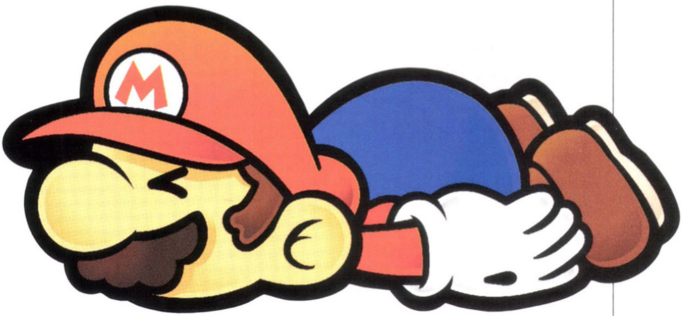
Best used . . . whenever you don't have to use any of the other Pixls. Dashell makes the game faster. Faster is better.

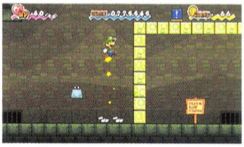
Found . . . at the bottom of the Flipside Pit of 100 Trials. You can access the pit—after you pick up Cudge—from Flipside Outskirts B2. (Hop across small blocks to a ledge, then flip to 3-D to enter a secret hallway that leads to a switch. Stomp the switch to open the way to the pit's warp pipe.) You can also access the pit later in the game by using Luigi's Super Jump to reach the switch. You'll need to get through 100 enemy-filled rooms to reach the boss battle against Wracktail at the bottom of the pit, so remember to pack some recovery items. After you defeat Wracktail, you can pick up Dashell.



Dashell allows you to run super-kicky fast.

My pose is not representative of gameplay.





BEAT THE GAME (Optional)

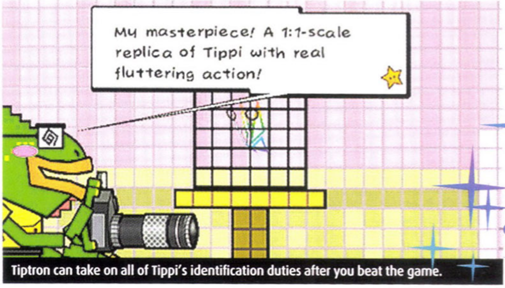
Tiptron

Primary talent: See Tippi.

Secret talent: See Tippi.

Best used . . . after you lose Tippi at the end of the game.

Found . . . at Fort Francis in 3-4. After you beat the game, return to Chapter 3-4 with 999 coins to buy a perfect working replica of Tippi from Francis. How will you find 999 coins? That's your business, pal.



My masterpiece! A 1:1-scale replica of Tippi with real fluttering action!

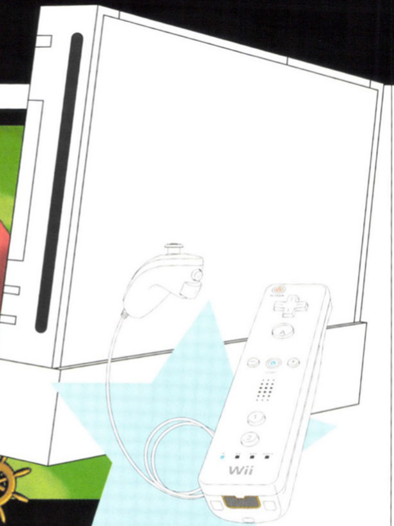
Tiptron can take on all of Tippi's identification duties after you beat the game.

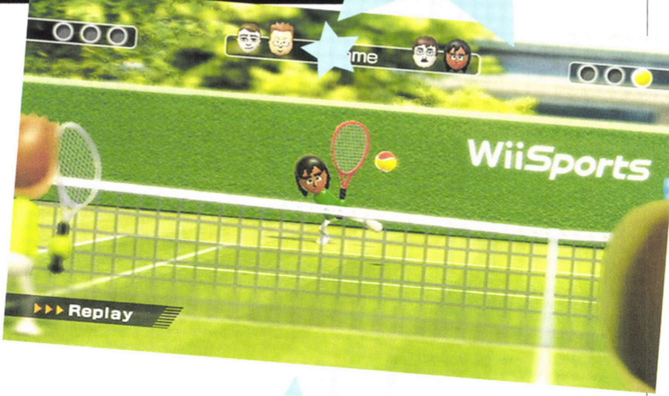
A DEVELOPING REVOLUTION

Key creative minds discuss **Wii's enormous impact** on the way games are played and made.

By Giancarlo Varanini

Slither Gripper



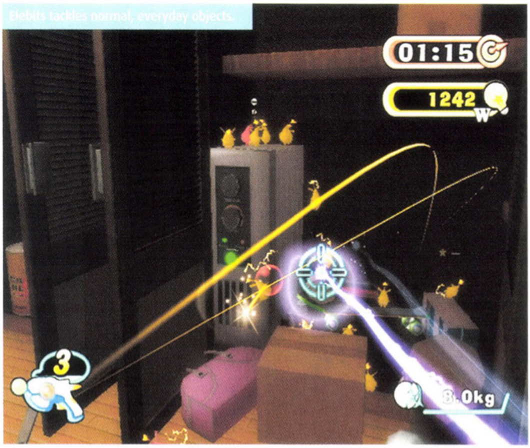


The First Reaction

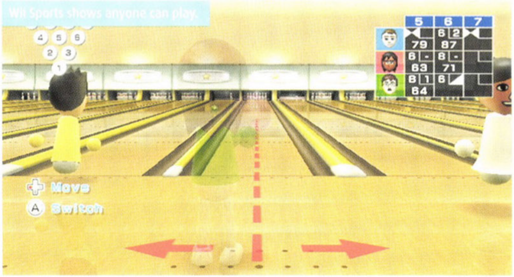
On November 19, 2006, there was a shift in the North American video game industry, and what most outsiders saw as an enormous gamble began to pay off—Nintendo launched its fifth console, appropriately called Wii and developers were enthusiastic from the start: "To me, it was a perfect extension of what Nintendo had accomplished with the DS," says Shingo Mukaitoge, producer for Konami's Elebits and the upcoming Dewy's Adventure. "To bring this kind of engaging experience from a handheld to a home console, was risky, but ultimately proved to be a very shrewd decision."

Other developers were equally excited about the possibilities. "The remote control was something we had anticipated, but we were surprised by the quality of the console's motion-sensor technology," says Akitoshi Kawazu, producer of Square Enix's upcoming FINAL FANTASY Crystal Chronicles: Crystal Bearers for Wii. "This opened up opportunities for creating games we never would have thought of before." Sonic Team's Yojiro Ogawa, director and producer of Sonic and the Secret Rings, knew Nintendo was onto something: "I felt Nintendo's spirit of challenging the industry to go in a different direction for non-game users was very exciting."

> **"But more important than that is what you do with those times when everyone is focusing on you."**
> —Shigeru Miyamoto


Elebits tackles normal, everyday objects.

Not all developers were on board initially, however. Hironobu Takeshita, producer of Capcom's Project Treasure Island Z, confesses, "When I first had the chance to see the Wii, I figured there would be a lot of potential for the system, but I wasn't sure how the players would receive it. I was on the fence being excited for the new system and wanting to see how it would do. But when I first had a chance to experience the motion-sensing controls for myself, my opinion of Wii changed. At that point, I could understand it really was a new way of playing games. The controls would be something a casual player could handle and this would open the way for an entirely new type of game that couldn't be done before with other consoles."


Wii Sports shows anyone can play.

Indeed, the idea that people who don't normally play games would be more likely to pick up a Wii is a driving force behind the console's success. But few industry insiders ever seem concerned that this will drive away Nintendo's hard-core fans. In fact, many developers think the opposite: "I do not have any concerns about the potential [number of Wii owners] being cut down," Sega's Ogawa states. "I feel that the Wii can continue to gain new audiences." Capcom's Takeshita agrees: "I figured it would attract a new audience and that even if the core video game audience didn't accept it at first, they would eventually come around."

Sonic, re-invented for a new audience.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

A Who's Who

We talked to several key developers to get their thoughts on Wii, how it has affected the development process, and what the future holds. The quick-reference list here will help you keep track of all the players involved.

ALEX HYDER producer, SSX Blur, EA Montreal

AKITOSHI KAWAZU, producer FINAL FANTASY Crystal Chronicles, Square Enix

STEPHANIE LANGLOIS development-team manager, Red Steel, Ubisoft

SHIGERU MIYAMOTO general manager, Nintendo EAD

SHINGO MUKAITOGE producer, Elebits and Dewy's Adventure, Konami

YOJIRO OGAWA director and producer, Sonic and the Secret Rings, Sonic Team

HIRONOBU TAKESHITA producer, Project Treasure Island Z Capcom

The reactions leading up to the launch—from developers and consumers alike—put a spotlight square on Nintendo, and the company couldn't have been any happier about it. "Of course, my biggest concern is always that people's impression of Nintendo is going to decline, or that people will stop thinking about us. So the fact that so many people are focused on us right now is great," says Shigeru Miyamoto, creator of Donkey Kong, Mario, Link, and many other invaluable Nintendo properties. "It's making me very happy, almost to the point of scaring me. But more important than that is what you do with those times when everyone is focusing on you. So that's obviously something that I'm paying attention to."

Back to the Drawing Board

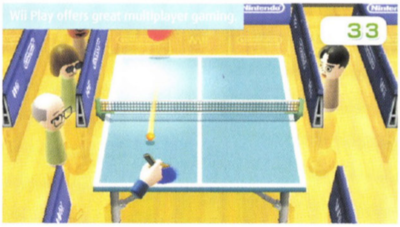
There's a pretty basic equation involved when deciding whether to go with an established franchise or something entirely new. "The question of [new properties] versus an existing franchise is fundamentally the same even on a new platform," says Alex Hyder, producer of SSX Blur at EA's Montreal studio. "A new property is slower to develop and has a higher risk of failure, although if it turns out to be a hit, the upside is much greater."

Due to that give-and-take, there seems to be a pretty even mixture of old and new on Wii. For Mukaitoge and his Elebits team, their choice was clear—even if it meant more work: "It's certainly possible to create a new experience with an existing franchise by introducing motion controls, but you can have a greater impact if you start from scratch with a new property," he says. "Elebits started in our minds with the basic question of, 'So what exactly can this Wii controller do?' So the game is tailored to the system in ways you can't necessarily express with an older franchise that's set in its ways."

ACCIDENTAL FUN

Miyamoto on Multiplayer

Wii has become popular quickly in terms of local multiplayer, and Shigeru Miyamoto says that it comes simply as a result of trying to make games people will like. "For us, we're not really focusing explicitly on trying to create multiplayer experiences on Wii—a much more important topic is how do we create using this new interface for gameplay ideas that are going to be new, unique, and fun," he says. "But at the same time, they have to be fun in a way that other people in the household who are watching the player will get entertained, excited, and want to pick up a controller."

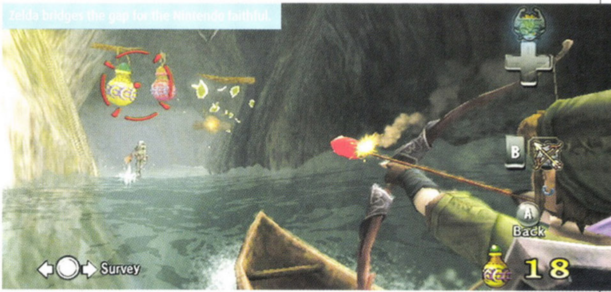


Wii Play offers great multiplayer gaming.

Others saw an opportunity to blend old and new by tailoring a popular franchise to the Wii's unique capabilities. "For Sonic and the Secret Rings, the main theme was to revolutionize Sonic. Until now, the main target was young audiences, but for this game we wanted to aim for an older range and expand the audience," Ogawa recalls. "The use of a completely new controlling feature requires users to get used to it like getting used to riding a bicycle."

Miyamoto's own strategy is to see what can be done with the gameplay before deciding if popular characters would enhance or detract from the experience. "What's most important is trying to find those elements of fun that are going to attract people who never play games or are going to continue to entertain people who are playing games," he says. "So for me, it's not about how we use the characters so much as how we find the unique, core elements of fun and bring those to people. Usually the way I design a game, I don't start by thinking about a character. I start by thinking about a fun gameplay element. And we flesh that gameplay element out until we know what the game is going to be."

> **"Elebits started in our minds with the basic question of, 'so what exactly can this Wii controller do?'"**
> **—Shingo Mukaitoge**



Zelda bridges the gap for the Nintendo faithful.

Is It Everything to Everyone?

Stories of traditional nongamers getting in on the Wii action are becoming common. More and more, you hear about a person playing Wii Sports who is joined by several other people, most of whom don't normally play video games. The notion that Wii is a console for everyone seems much less far-fetched than it once did, and developers are already embracing the phenomenon. "I don't think developers always need to focus on both [experienced and new gamers] at the same time. It would be better to have some games that focus on hard-core gamers, which is still a pretty broad category, and some games that focus on casual gamers," Takeshita explains. "My current project, Treasure Island Z appeals to a wider, casual audience. Capcom is a company that has a lot of experience developing games for hard-core gamers, so designing a game that will be just the right level of difficulty for casual players to enjoy is a challenging but interesting aspect of the project."

That doesn't mean Capcom—or any other developer—is abandoning its fan base. "Capcom has always been about making games anyone can enjoy and games that have a deeper experience waiting for those who scratch beneath the surface," Takeshita continues. "This policy resembles the one Nintendo seems to have for Wii, so Capcom is looking forward to making games for the platform. We also look forward to designing games for Wii that will impress even hard-core gamers."

For some, there's a far simpler approach involved when it comes to making Wii games that have broad appeal. "My philos-

WarioWare: a game made for everyone?

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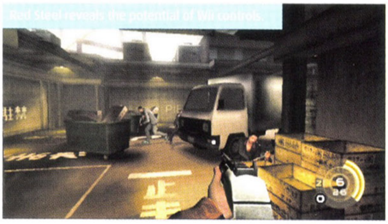
> “We also look forward to designing games for Wii that will impress even hardcore gamers.”
> —Hironobu Takeshita

ophy is that good games on Wii will be popular with all kinds of players,” Konami’s Mukaitoge says. “I don’t feel you have to go out of your way to cater to any one group.” Square Enix producer Kawazu sees it a little differently: “There will always be a need to keep users in mind as long as the gaming industry is part of the service industry,” he says. “If there are two differing types of users, we should do our best to cater to both. On the other hand, games are also creative work, so we should try to explore new, interesting, and innovative forms of entertainment. The best-selling games will probably be those that cater specifically to either user type, but I have high hopes that in the near future, there will be a game that casual and hardcore gamers alike will flock to buy.”

Games like SSX Blur cater to hardcore fans.

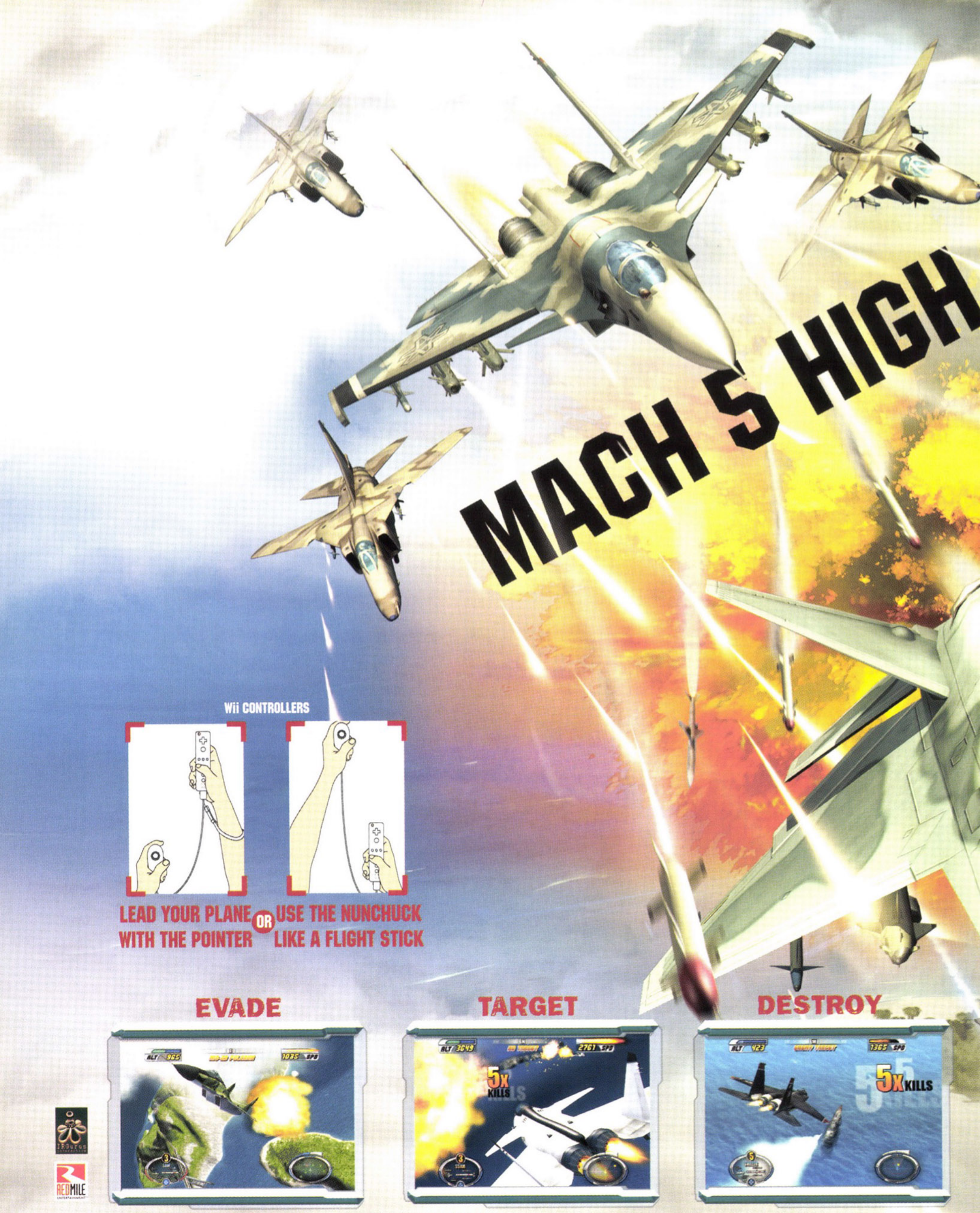
Red Steel reveals the potential of Wii controls.



Dewy, and other original characters, find a home on Wii.

No matter the development strategy, most developers agree that Wii has a very promising future. “[Wii’s] greatest strength is that it gives us the ability to do something we couldn’t do before,” says EA’s Hyder. “That’s huge.” The fact that Wii is also very accessible is an important theme that keeps coming up. “Games don’t seem so complicated anymore,” Stephanie Langlois, development-team manager on Red Steel adds. “The way [people] move in their lives is the way they play in the game, so it’s very intuitive. They don’t have to deal with complex interfaces and controls anymore.”

Kawazu expands on this idea: “[Accessible controls] are a direct result of [Wii’s] unique interface that, on the surface, seems to promote simple and direct gameplay,” he says. “But if a game designer lets himself or herself become constrained by this and fails to create innovative content, then this strength quickly becomes the console’s weakness. The future of Wii gaming will rest upon a synergistic relationship between the game creator and his or her audience.”


MACH 5 HIGH
Wii CONTROLLERS
LEAD YOUR PLANE WITH THE POINTER
OR
USE THE NUNCHUCK LIKE A FLIGHT STICK
EVADE
TARGET
DESTROY
5x KILLS
5x KILLS

IRGurus

REDMILE ENTERTAINMENT

TEEN

T

Mild Language and Violence.

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"...no previous game has shown that the motion sensitivity in the Nunchuk could be this responsive." Nintendo Power (Feb 2007/V212)

Wii

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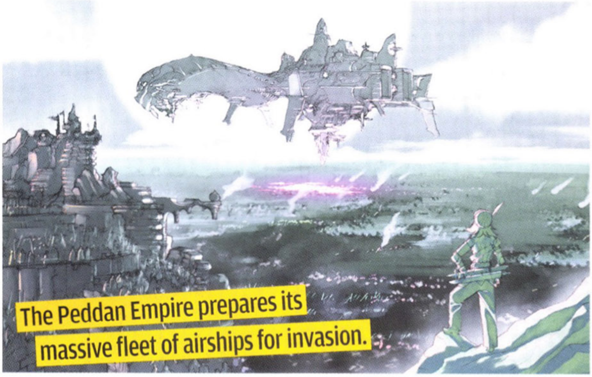
www.codemasters.com/heatseeker

Ready for War

Square Enix embraces a new strategy with **Heroes of Mana** for Nintendo DS.

By Giancarlo Varanini


The Peddan Empire prepares its massive fleet of airships for invasion.

The Mana series may not have a FINAL FANTASY-level pedigree, but the long-running series still attracts a wide variety of fans. The latest addition to the Mana universe—due this summer—is a drastic departure from its action-RPG predecessors. Mainstays of the series have been replaced with intense real-time strategy skirmishes that not only require the use of brute strength, but also a sharp mind as enemies attack from every possible direction.

The Calm Before the Storm

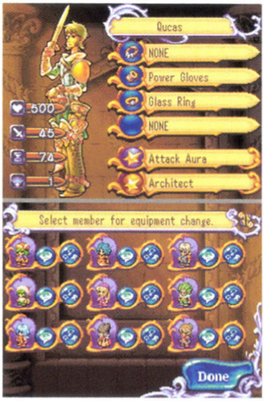
Fans of the Mana series will be happy to know Heroes takes place 19 years before the events that transpire in the Secret of Mana's sequel, which was never brought to North America. From all indications, Heroes of Mana's story is surprisingly complex, massive in scope and Shakespearean in tone with plots ranging from good old-fashioned backstabbing and deception to world domination and genocide. Throw in a little bit of the "former enemies now friends" theme, as well as a cast of dozens of unique characters with personalities that reflect their fighting style or specialized combat skills, and you have a good idea of what Heroes of Mana is all about. Those having trouble following the plot can access a story recap feature available in the options menu to get the lowdown on which characters did what and to who—the story is just that intricate.

The Battle Begins

Like any other real-time strategy game, Heroes of Mana relies on your ability to balance resources and unit construction while facing the constant threat of attack from the enemy. The frenetic pace of combat also requires you to know how each unit performs in any given situation. The units that you get to know right away are primary characters featured throughout the story. And to avoid entering a fight at a disadvantage, you select a designated number of these characters before the start of a battle. Also, the characters you select help shape the strategy you use, so choosing characters with long-range attacks means you should also add short-range attack units to balance them out and keep them safe. Heroes of Mana has a streamlined setup via your airship, which follows you onto the battlefield.

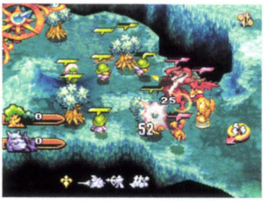
Aboard the airship, you can build both units and structures to aid your main characters in battle. You can only build one-type of structure initially, but it produces gatherer units, the building blocks of your army. Gatherer units collect resources that are visible on the map. Some resources may be found in the vicinity of your airship, but as you deplete easily-obtained local supplies, you'll have to send scouting expeditions farther a field, pushing back the fog of war and risking battle to uncover new resources.

Heroes of Mana also offers a unique—and welcome—alternative to the traditional dangers of RTS resource scouting, which is to send your airship base along with your main force. But for your airbase to properly function—it must be anchored to one of several anchor points located on the map. The airship's mobility is also quite useful when an enemy breaches your defenses and assaults your base. Quickly recalling units and moving your airship to a

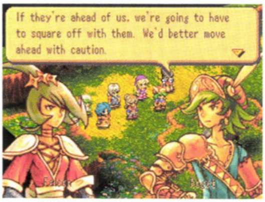


Select member for equipment change.

Each battle in Heroes of Mana starts with the option to select a specified number of party members to bring along.



Resources are clearly marked at the left of the screen while unit-grouping options are located at the bottom and to the right. The compass changes your view of the battle.



If they're ahead of us, we're going to have to square off with them. We'd better move ahead with caution.

Much of the story is told just before and right after battles, but there are a few fully animated scenes sprinkeled throughout Heroes of Mana.

From all indications, Heroes of Mana's story is surprisingly complex, massive in scope, and Shakespearean in tone.

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Fans of Warcraft, Command & Conquer, and other RTS games will feel right at home with Heroes of Mana.

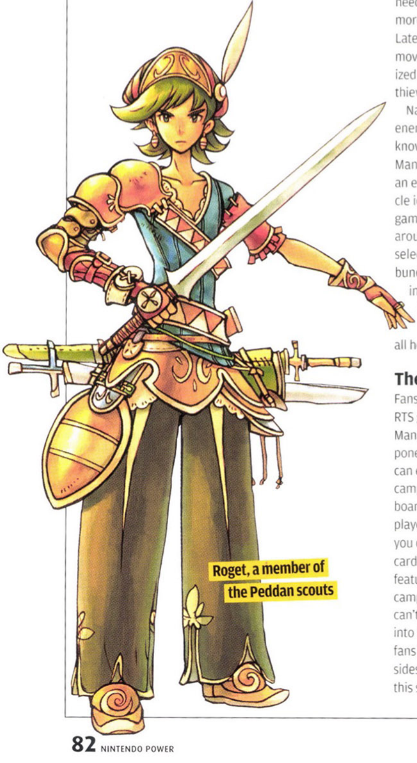
a safer part of the map to regroup and rebuild your shattered defenses is often one of the smartest moves you can make.

Mana Y Mana

Once you have a steady stream of resources flowing into your airship, you can build barracks. There are different barracks for each unit type: a regular ground soldier, heavy unit, missile unit, flying unit, or special unit. And each unit type has advantages and disadvantages against certain enemy units and terrain. For example, flying units will do double damage to a heavy unit, whereas a regular ground unit can do only half-damage to a heavy unit. Likewise, missile units can do double damage to aerial units and ground units can do double damage to missile units. You also gain access to special units such as catapults, which can do damage to just about any unit if placed correctly. It sounds intimidating but it's logical and, thanks to the colorful design of the units, you shouldn't have much trouble determining which is which on the field.

Unit relationships aren't the only consideration, however. Terrain also plays a very important role in just about every aspect of the game since units often have skills and abilities that correspond to a specific type of environment. Some units are more adept at navigating hilly, treacherous terrain than others—which can turn a battle quickly because slow, less agile units make it harder for you to get where you need to go. Terrain can also make retreat quite a bit more difficult. But it can work to your advantage. Later in the game, you'll have access to units that can move across some terrain with ease, such as specialized gatherers that can move through water and thieves that can scale hills with ease.

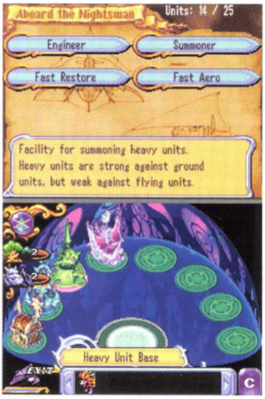
Navigating through a battle of friendly and enemy units can be a little cumbersome if you don't know what you're doing. Thankfully, Heroes of Mana gives you options that make it easy. Selecting an entire group of units is as easy as hitting the circle icon at the right of the screen, which pauses the game and gives you a few seconds to draw a circle around the units you want to control. If you want to select a single type of unit that's mixed in with a bunch of other units, you can either select units individually by clicking their corresponding icon at the bottom of the screen or switch to a unit type menu. From there, you select all missile units, all heavy units, and so on.



Roget, a member of the Peddan scouts

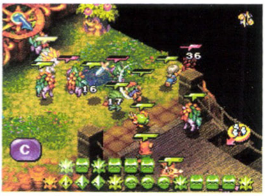
The Field General

Fans of WarCraft, Command & Conquer, and other RTS games will feel right at home with Heroes of Mana, particularly because of the multiplayer component. There are Wi-Fi specific missions where you can earn special items to use in the single-player campaign. Additionally, the game features ranking boards where your skills are measured against other players from North America. If Wi-Fi isn't your thing, you can also play against another person in multi-card mode to test your skills. With these multiplayer features—along with a rich and deep single-player campaign filled with intense battles and intrigue—we can't really imagine what else Square Enix could put into Heroes of Mana to entice fans of the genre or fans of RPGs. We'll have to wait and see what both sides think when the game hits store shelves later this summer.

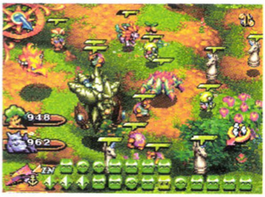


Facility for summoning heavy units. Heavy units are strong against ground units, but weak against flying units.

When you've gathered enough stone, you can start building sophisticated structures that give you even-more-powerful units.



Once you have all of your structures built, you can build additional units, move out, and engage the enemy in some intense battles.



Player rankings and exclusive missions (with-special items you can use in the single-player campaign) are available in Wi-Fi mode.

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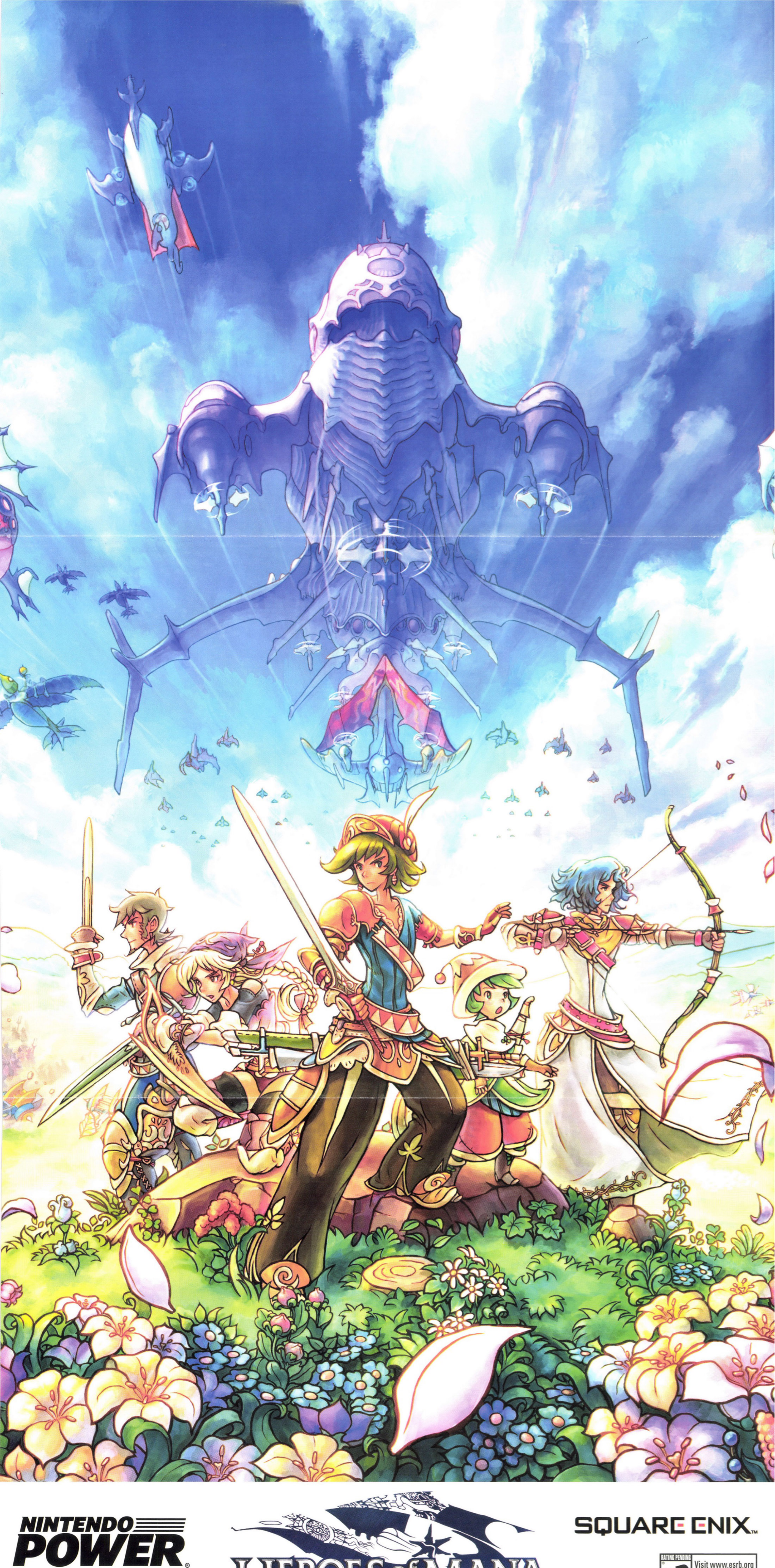

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Enjoying your Wii?

Here are a few reminders:

Remember: Wear the wrist strap when using the Wii Remote. Make sure all players use the wrist strap and that the strap lock is correctly tightened. When sharing the Wii Remote between multiple players, make sure each person using the remote properly uses the wrist strap.

Remember: Don't let go of the Wii Remote during game play. Simply release the button on the remote. Hold the remote securely and avoid excessive motion during game play. If your hands become moist, stop and dry your hands.

Remember: Allow adequate room around you during game play. Stay at least three (3) feet away from the television. As you move around during game play, make sure objects and other people are out of your range of movement or arm motion to prevent damage or injury.

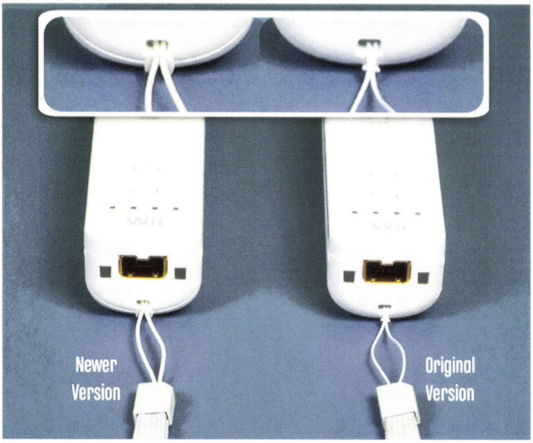
WRIST STRAP REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

For more information on Wii safety, please visit www.nintendo.com/consumer/wiisafety.jsp

Nintendo has received some reports that when consumers swing the Wii Remote with the original version of the wrist-strap using excessive force and accidentally let go, the cord connecting the controller to the wrist strap can break, potentially causing the Wii Remote to strike bystanders or objects.

Nintendo is offering to replace the original version of the wrist straps for the Wii Remote with a newer version for free. The cords on the original wrist straps are 0.6 mm in diameter, and the cords on the replacement straps is a minimum of 1.0mm. Please check the wrist strap on your Wii Remote to see if you have the original or new version (see picture at right). Wii video game systems purchased after December 11, 2006 should have the new 1.0 mm cord. Individually sold Wii Remotes purchased after December 18, 2006 should also have the 1.0mm cord.

For more information on obtaining replacement wrist straps, please call (800) 859-4519 or visit www.nintendo.com/consumer/strapreplace.jsp



>Exclusive Hands-on

Enter the Ninja

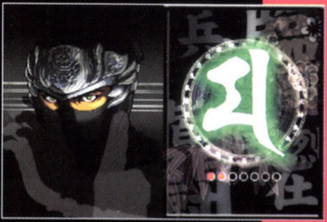
It was an NES fan favorite before it became one of the Xbox's defining games. Now the Ninja Gaiden series is making a surprising jump to the DS. Join us for a word with series designer Tomonobu Itagaki, and an exclusive hands-on look at

Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword.

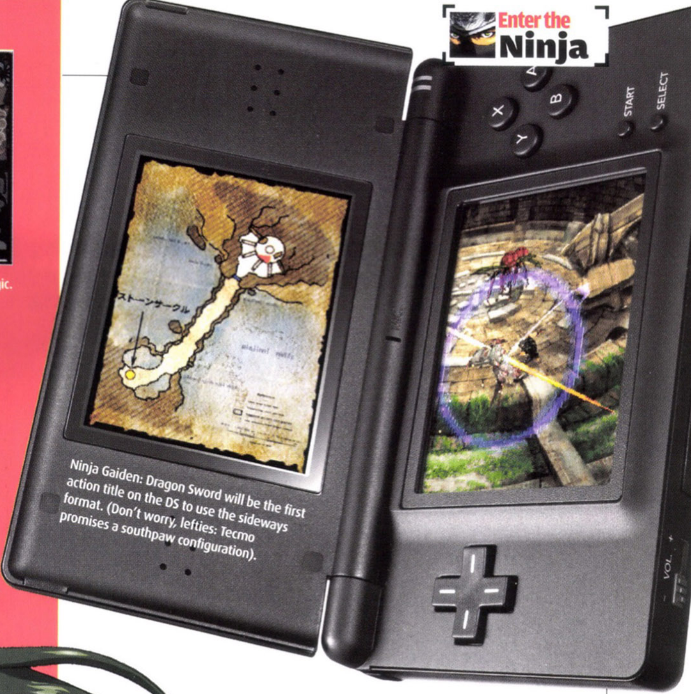
By Andy Myers

On playgrounds of the late '80s, arguing over the pronunciation of the word "Gaiden" was even more popular an activity than hanging from the monkey bars. Ninja Gaiden became an instant classic due to its high difficulty level, intense action, and groundbreaking cut-scenes. But after a successful trilogy, the series remained mostly dormant for more than a decade. Today, Ninja Gaiden lives on thanks in part to a well-received comeback title for Xbox in 2004. The franchise received the fresh start it needed, but those wanting to play Ninja Gaiden on a Nintendo system had only fond memories.

Now Tecmo and developer Team Ninja are bringing the series to DS with Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword. Furthermore, they've flipped the game on its side (see the DS opposite) and created a stylus-focused control scheme. It's surprising, it's unorthodox, and it looks to be one of the most intriguing action games in years.



The stylus represents Ryu's finger when casting ninja magic.



Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword will be the first action title on the DS to use the sideways format. (Don't worry, lefties: Tecmo promises a southpaw configuration).

The Touch of Death

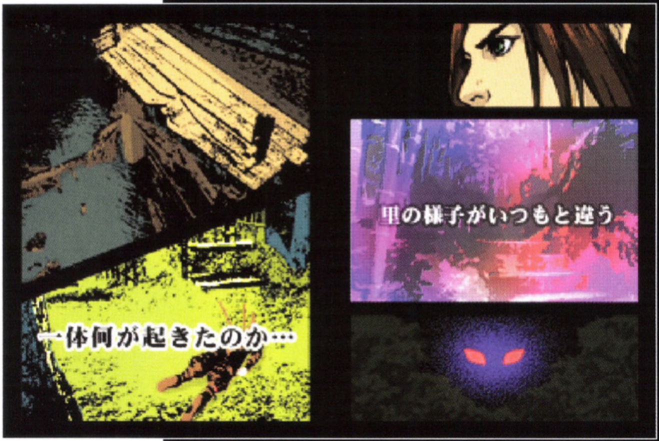
Whatever you think you know about stylus-controlled games, forget it. Tomonobu Itagaki and the fine folks at Team Ninja—the team responsible for the recent crop of Ninja Gaiden games, as well as the Dead or Alive series—are taking the concept to a totally new level and looking to change the way you experience an action game. You'll control the series' longtime hero, Ryu Hayabusa, almost exclusively with the stylus, and you'll do so with the DS on its side à la Hotel Dusk and Brain Age. The touch-centric control scheme came as somewhat of a shock to us—Team Ninja is known for creating fast-paced, twitch-action games requiring insane precision, after all. But after spending some hands-on time with the game, we were sold. You'll move Ryu with the stylus, quickly slashing in any direction to trigger a corresponding sword attack. In the 3-D environments enemies will almost always be coming at you from multiple directions—to avoid being surrounded, you can lash out from a distance by throwing a shuriken with a simple stylus tap. A double tap above Ryu will make him jump, at which point a whole new world of possibilities opens up: From the air you can tap to throw shurikens at enemies below, or simply slash down to perform a devastating downward sword attack. Even wall jumps are possible with the stylus—just tap the wall while Ryu is in midair, and he'll do the rest. Blocking is the only aspect that involves a button press; the action is mapped cleverly to the Control Pad (any direction will do).

Of course, it wouldn't be a Ninja Gaiden game without some ninja magic. A small icon on the touch screen will stop the action and bring up a prompt, and in response you must quickly draw a shape to cast a spell. We uncovered two spells during our play session—a fire spell and a water spell—there are sure to be many others. The demo we played was unfinished, but the stylus-heavy control scheme felt very responsive. Even during a boss battle, the experience seemed on par with its console predecessor—no small feat considering the differences in hardware. It's easily one of the most unique control configurations we've seen yet on the handheld, and we can't wait to get ahold of the final version.

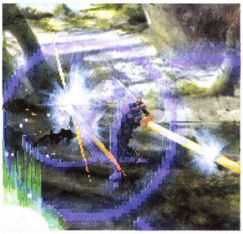
Ryu Re-imagined

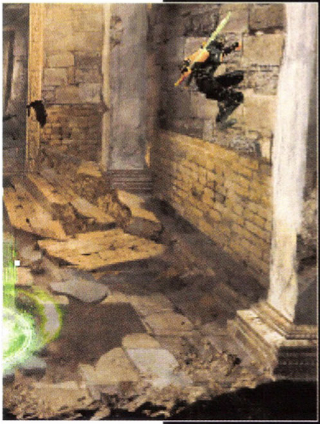
Dragon Sword is not a port, or even a remake—it's a brand-new game that begins one month after the Xbox title, once again in the troubled Vigor Empire. The events that took place in the previous game have not been fully resolved, so Ryu must return to the ravaged land to tie up loose ends. His main nemeses this time around are two ancient demons (known in the Ninja Gaiden world as "greater fiends") named Nicchae and Ishataros. You may recognize the fiends' names, as they were responsible for much carnage in Vigor's past—but Dragon Sword aims to flesh out their stories and explain how they brought the evil Vigor emperor to power. When Ryu's not swinging his sword, the story is told through comic-book-style cut-scenes that play off the booklike format of the sideways-held DS. Many familiar faces will show up throughout the tale, as will a new, yet-to-be-named female ninja—she'll even be playable at the beginning of the game.

Dragon Sword is still under development and many details are under wraps, but we do know that Ryu will revisit some stages from the Xbox game, which have been revamped for DS. All additional stages will be entirely new, giving die-hard fans a major reason to embrace the title. But Tecmo and Team Ninja hope that Dragon Sword will also appeal to a whole new generation of players hungry for a different kind of action game. Expect the title to hit sometime in 2007.



Dragon Sword's cut-scenes will give you a chance to blink.

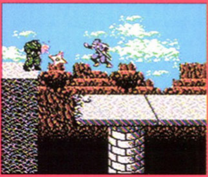




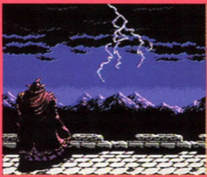
>>Kickin' It Old School

Hailed for its quick yet responsive gameplay, the original Ninja Gaiden is regarded by many as one of the best action-platformers on the NES—and it's two sequels are no less impressive. Each game in the trilogy brought a new element to the genre, from climbing walls to hanging on ceilings. We'd love to see all three of these classic titles show up on Wii's Virtual Console.

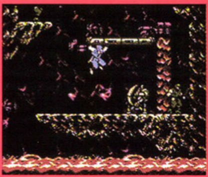
Ninja Gaiden (1989)



Ninja Gaiden II: The Dark Sword of Chaos (1990)



Ninja Gaiden III: The Ancient Ship of Doom (1991)



>Interview

We discuss Ninja Gaiden's past, present, and future with legendary game designer Tomonobu Itagaki.

Nintendo Power: You've always put a big emphasis on graphics. Why did you decide to bring Ninja Gaiden to the DS instead of a different platform?

Tomonobu Itagaki: Coming from a history of making fighting games, it was always the policy to work on the most powerful hardware. And then we made our first action game with Ninja Gaiden. And I thought that if I continued to follow the same paradigm when I was trying to do something brand-new, that that wouldn't be very challenging. So, in order to really achieve a totally new concept, I thought that the DS was the best avenue to go with.

NP: How has Team Ninja's experience with the DS hardware been so far?

TI: It's been a great experience working on the DS hardware. A lot of people forget that when the DS was first announced, one of the first companies to [announce work on] a DS game was Team Ninja. It has taken us this long to finally bring it to a point where we can [show] it, so we're really happy to be able to do that. I started out as a programmer working on Super Nintendo [games], so working on a similar Nintendo architecture has been very fulfilling—it's been easy to work with. Obviously, if you look at the details it's much more powerful than the Super Nintendo . . . but the underlying theme of the Nintendo architecture being easy to work on is similar.

NP: What came first: the idea to use the stylus with a game, or simply a desire to bring Ninja Gaiden to the DS?

TI: For us, it was definitely doing a game with the stylus first and foremost. It's about looking at the characteristics of the hardware first—what's unique about that hardware—then developing software for those characteristics.

NP: Are there any other unique uses of the DS hardware in Ninja Gaiden, such as the microphone or Wi-Fi?

TI: Obviously, since Team Ninja has such a long history doing fighting games, we originally thought, let's do a Wi-Fi-based fighting game. But when we really got down to it, we realized that the key is to take the stylus, the touch-screen functionality of the DS, and really tailor the game to that.

NP: Ninja Gaiden is known in part for its high level of difficulty. Will that trend continue in the DS game?

TI: Obviously there were a lot of great things about the original Ninja Gaiden. The difficulty was well received in some circles, but I'm not totally happy with how the difficulty turned out in the first game. I think you're going to see that the Ninja Gaiden franchise in the future is going to be moving in a slightly different direction when it comes to difficulty. And I think that the first good opportunity to display that is with Ninja Gaiden DS.

NP: So, does that mean no Alma in the DS game?

TI: Let me give you some more-detailed facts, because I know there are a lot of fans out there. The difficulty of Ninja Gaiden for Xbox was necessary because of how that game was designed. But I think that you'll see that with Ninja Gaiden DS with its different style of gameplay, that there's going to be a different level of difficulty that will work well with that.

NP: So who are you trying to appeal to with this game? Do you see this as appealing to more of an expanded audience, or to the hard-core gamer?

TI: It's mainly aimed toward boys and men of all ages. That doesn't mean we're going to be making the world within the game more cartoony to appeal to more audiences. You know how kids sometimes like to stretch themselves a bit, and play games that are more mature? That's kind of what we're going for. Make it more accessible, but keep the core Ninja Gaiden feeling intact . . . I have a 10-year-old daughter at home, and I have an agreement with her that I'm going to make a game for the DS before she's out of elementary school. So that's another motivation for me. That's one of the hidden secrets behind this game.

NP: What do you think the most important aspects are in creating a good action game?

TI: The most important thing is probably to make sure that you're not compromising on the playability and the feeling of the game. In other words, when you press a button, you want something to happen right away. You want to be sensitive to the fact that you're getting a distinct payback for every input that you're giving. So, it's about looking at what the player might want to do versus what our command structure does. Those are some examples, but obviously one thing is just to have a gorgeous game that people are going to look at and say, wow, that's amazing.

NP: It does look really, really good. Is there anything special you did to make the game look as good as it does on DS?

TI: No, we just made it like we would any other game, and this is how it turned out. Obviously, there are a lot of games that are lighter fare out there, especially on this kind of platform, so I wanted to make sure that when people see the game, they're going to know that it's my game.

NP: Something that's always been noted about Ninja Gaiden that makes it such a visceral action game is the violence associated with it, that when you do a really powerful move, you see an enemy ninja and, you know, his head falls off or something. Do you feel restricted in doing similar types of things for the DS, or are you going to go full on and replicate that?

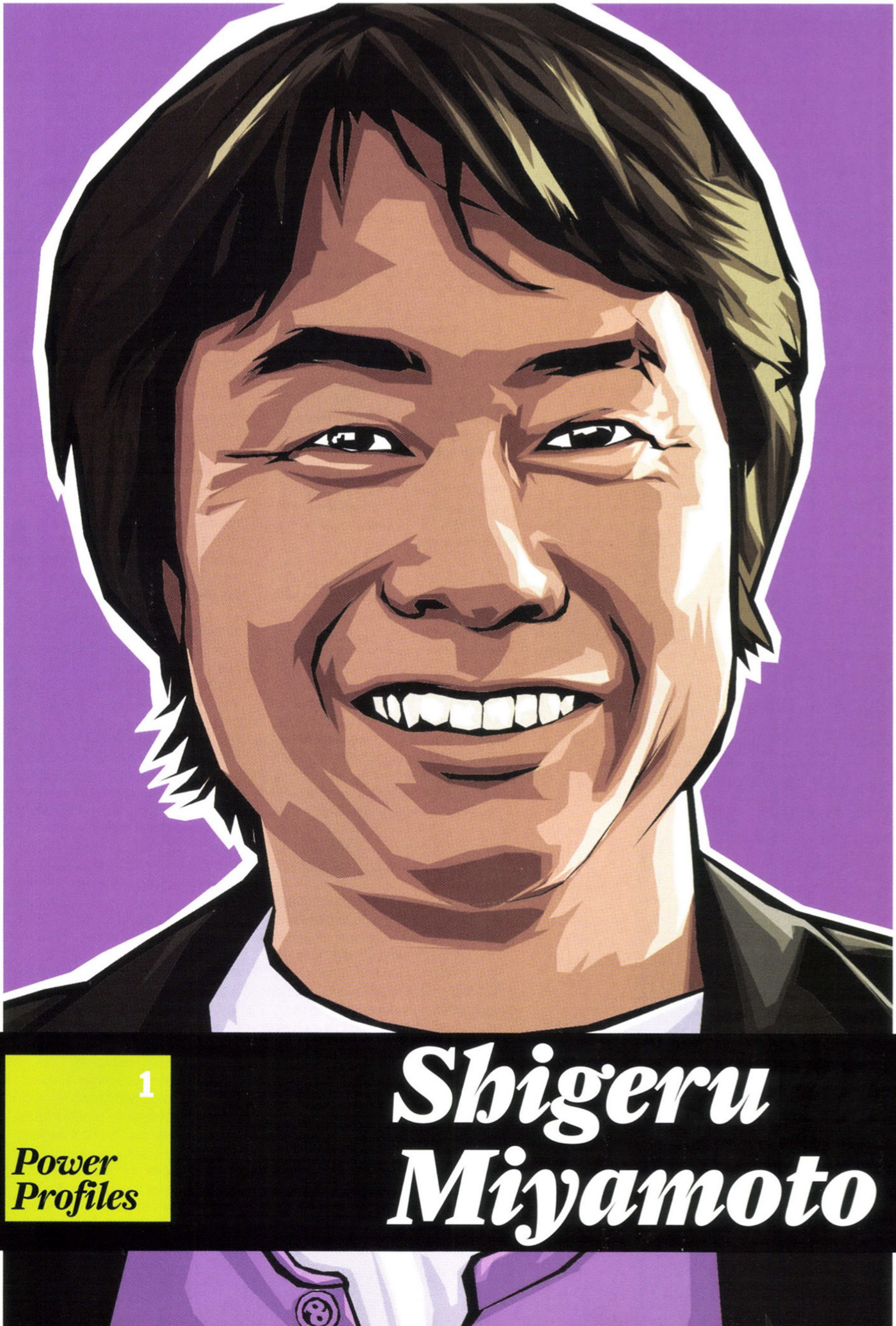
TI: No. In fact, for this title, we're trying to get it as close as we can to an E rating. It may not be possible, but it's not as much about the violent side of the equation for this game. Games that I make for consoles are almost always M-rated. So I think it's another challenge for me and our team to make a game that can stand on its own just with the action, not necessarily with all the violence included.

NP: In the console Ninja Gaiden games, you put in a little something extra for the old fans of the old Ninja Gaiden series. I was wondering if we can look forward to anything like that being in the DS version.

TI: That's an interesting question. Ninja Gaiden for Xbox was the first action game that Team Ninja was doing. It was based on a franchise that still has a lot of fans around the world back from the days of the [NES]. We had feedback like, "Don't screw this up; don't mess up the Ninja Gaiden franchise." So, I included those classic games on the disc to show people and say, look at how far the series has come. . . . I think that accomplished what we wanted to do there, and now we're moving on. And the design philosophy is completely different. The old side-scrolling designs were very much memorization games . . . whereas Ninja Gaiden for Xbox, and by extension, future Ninja Gaiden games as well, are very based on reflexes, about how fast you can adapt to the situation.

NP: Since Ryu's outfit was unlockable in Super Swing Golf, we have to ask: Is there any chance of some Wii activity in the Ninja Gaiden series?

TI: I think it's an interesting idea. I look at the boxing in Wii Sports, and how that works, and I think it would be really interesting to do an action game on the Wii with that control scheme. But, to be honest, there's only one of me, and I can only work on one or maybe two games at a time. So there's a limit to how many things that can be done. I mean, I'm the kind of producer that's actually hands-on, physically involved with everything I do.



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Power Profiles

Shigeru Miyamoto

As the video game medium continues to grow and evolve, it seems increasingly important to recognize the creative minds that drive our most beloved form of entertainment. To that end, our new Power Profiles series will shine a spotlight on gaming's greatest luminaries.

This column isn't about interrogating developers regarding their latest projects (we'll continue to do that in other features throughout the magazine); it's an effort to learn more about these men and women as creators. What makes them tick? How do they go about crafting the wonderful experiences loved by millions of players around the world? Hopefully we can provide relatively new gamers with a compelling introduction to the industry's most important figures while giving longtime readers greater insight into their favorite artists.

Who better to kick off the column than legendary game designer Shigeru Miyamoto? The father of Mario and Zelda has been making games for over 20 years, and continues to be one of the art form's most influential figures. Ask any developer who inspires them, and the answer far more often than not will be Miyamoto. In 1998 he was the first inductee to the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences' Hall of Fame, and last year he was knighted into the Order of Arts and Literature in France. Of Miyamoto, famed Sims creator Will Wright once wrote, "Other designers may obsess about testing the limits of the hardware; [he] specializes in testing the limits of imagination."

DATE OF BIRTH:
November 16, 1952

BIRTHPLACE:
Kyoto, Japan

POSITION:
Director and General Manager, Nintendo Entertainment Analysis and Development (EAD)

BEST KNOWN FOR:
Creating Donkey Kong, Mario, Zelda; revolutionizing video game design

FAVORITE FOOD:
Pasta

CURRENT PROJECT:
Super Mario Galaxy

NP: For our readers who may not be aware, can you talk a bit about how you originally got into the video game business?

SM: Actually, when I first joined Nintendo, I didn't join to create video games. I had a background in industrial design, and when I joined the company I was initially doing art for arcade cabinets. I did do pixel art for inclusion in actual games, as well, but that was primarily because right around the time that I joined, Space Invaders was a big hit, and so Nintendo was starting to look into video games. So my first step into it was design for the arcade machines and some of the home systems that we did early on, and then drawing pixel art.

NP: How has your role at Nintendo changed over the past few years?

SM: A few years ago I was overseeing maybe about half of all Nintendo software, and that's still about what I'm overseeing right now. But at the same time, I've taken on more of a management role as well, so I've got some more management responsibilities. Also, because of those management responsibilities, I'm taking a more holistic approach in terms of looking at the relationship between hardware and software. And because of that, and coming from my software perspective, I would have to say that I've got a little more influence over some of the hardware decisions that are being made than I did in the past.

NP: We've heard that the inspiration for the original Legend of Zelda was your experience exploring the forest as a child. Can you tell us about that in your own words?

SM: This is something that I've noticed since I started creating things like Super Mario Bros., but I feel that as you create and try to flesh out a project, it's very important for you to kind of reflect back on your own experiences. It's a natural thing to do, but my feeling is that the more you're able to do that and the more you're able to find some overlap between the things you're creating and the experiences you've had, then generally the better that process goes.

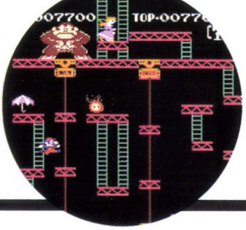
And while of course I'm happy to have all of our fans playing in our virtual worlds, to me it's also very important for people to go out and experience real life in the real world, because those are the experiences that you'll be able to draw on in the future when you're doing whatever it is that you end up doing. So that's why when people ask me, I always say that while it's great that people are playing video games, at the same time I want them on a day when the weather is nice to go outside and experience the world. Go see the world with their parents and grandparents, and experience the world with other people.

> *"As you create and try to flesh out a project, it's very important for you to kind of reflect back on your own experiences."*

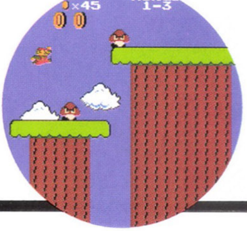
GAMEOGRAPHY

Mr. Miyamoto has worked on so many games over the years that we simply don't have space to list them all. Here is but a sampling from his amazing portfolio.

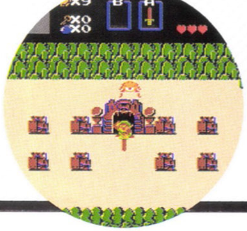
DONKEY KONG 1981,
ARCADE DESIGNER



SUPER MARIO BROS. 1985,
NES PRODUCER/DIRECTOR



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA 1987,
NES PRODUCER/DIRECTOR



NP: What is more important to Nintendo right now—creating new characters and properties or building on traditional ones?

SM: Actually, for me what's most important is trying to find those elements of fun that are going to attract people who never play games or are going to continue to entertain people who are playing games. So for me, it's not so much about how we use the characters so much as how we find the unique, core elements of fun and bring those to people. Usually the way that I design a game, I don't start by thinking about a character. I start by thinking about a fun gameplay element. And we flesh that gameplay element out until we know what the game is going to be. Then what we do at that point is we look and we say, "OK, if we use this particular franchise, is that going to help bring this idea to fruition, and help flesh the idea out." Or maybe if we apply, say, Mario or Pikmin to this core gameplay element, then maybe it will help that gameplay element succeed better. That's more the path that we take: looking not so much at the characters initially, but really looking at the gameplay.

> *"When I was in elementary school, I wanted to be involved in puppet shows. I wanted to be making puppets and designing sets and writing stories for puppet shows."*

NP: When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

SM: It actually changed over the years. When I was in elementary school, I wanted to be involved in puppet shows. I wanted to be making puppets and designing sets and writing stories for puppet shows. By the time I was in middle school, I wanted to be a comic-book artist.

NP: What's your favorite part of the creative process?

SM: Well it's always fun to come up with an idea and have that moment where you're thinking, "Oh that's going to be great! People are going to love this.' Or 'Wow, this is really unique. Nobody else is doing anything like this." But obviously trying to think up ideas isn't exactly a fun process. [Laughs] So really for me, the most exciting time is when we have brought all these ideas together and are in the process of turning that into an actual game. It's that period of where, on a daily basis as you're finalizing the product, you see it getting better and your ideas coming to fruition. That's really the most exciting part for me.

NP: When you're stumped by a particularly difficult problem, what's your process for working through it?

SM: Oh, that's a good question. [Laughs] I would have to say that in a situation like that, what I generally tend to do is just to sit back quietly and try to assess what the central problem is. Maybe it sounds like a management-seminar-type answer, but I think you really have to understand the nature of the problem before you can get over it. You know, sometimes people mistake me for being a somewhat negative person, but that's because once I've assessed the problem, what I do is I go and I find where the problems within that problem lie. If we're faced with a challenge that we can't overcome, then I look at it and say, "Alright, where are the things in this challenge that we're trying to accomplish that are impossible? What elements of this problem that's facing us are caused by things that we're doing wrong?" And so what I try to do then is cut off those negative aspects that are wrapped up in the problem and find a way to take that and lead us to an answer.

NP: Which creators in other forms of media, such as film, literature, and music, do you most admire or enjoy?

SM: There was a period when I was a big fan of special-effects movies and what they were doing in those movies. But lately, I've gotten a lot more interested in smaller-scale live performances. Anything from comedy to plays to concerts, and it's not that I go to them all the time, but you know, from time to time I'll go see friends' performances. And those I find to be very inspirational.

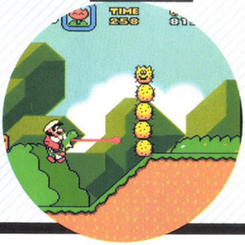
NP: What's your favorite non-gaming hobby or pastime?

SM: Actually, I like carpentry and home repair. Fixing things, making things. [Laughs]

NP: If you could have one superpower, what would it be and why?

SM: I never really thought about that. [Laughs] I think it'd be nice to be able to know what people are thinking. To be able to look at somebody and know their true thoughts.

SUPER MARIO WORLD 1991, SNES PRODUCER



STAR FOX 64 1997, N64 PRODUCER

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME 1998, N64 PRODUCER

PIKMIN 2001, GAMECUBE PRODUCER

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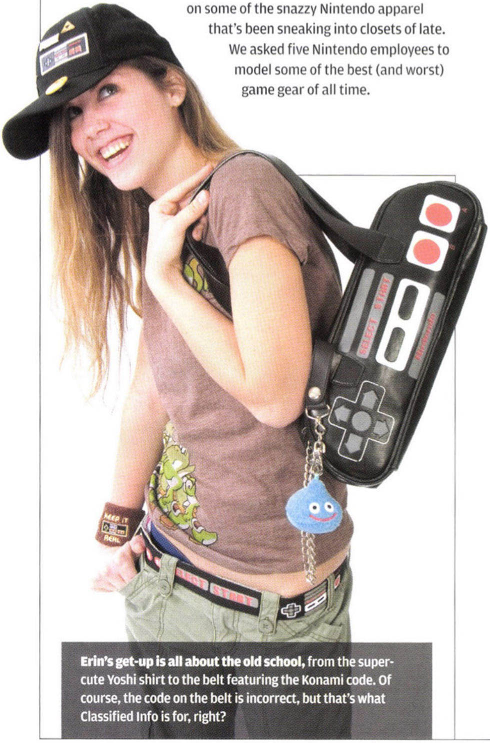
GEEK Chic

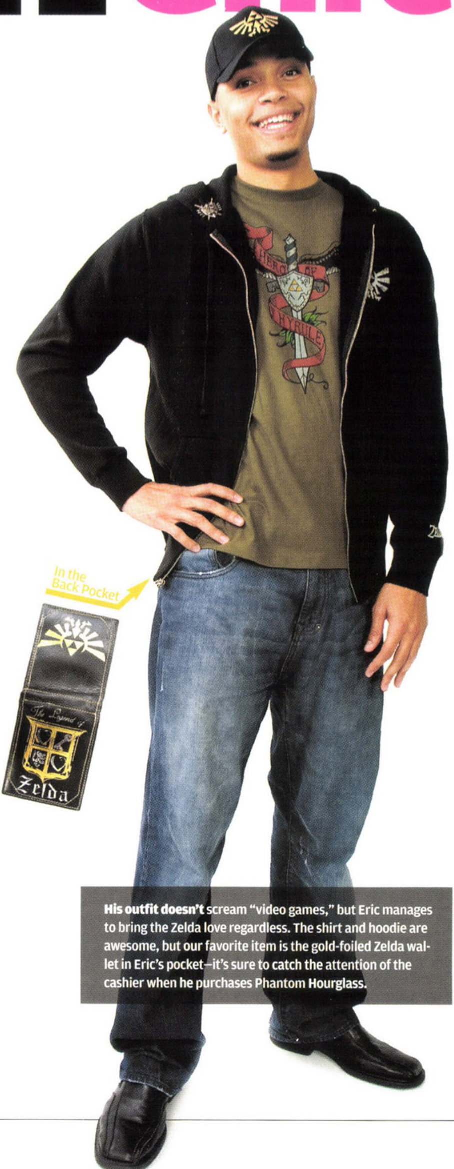
Is it possible to show your love for Mario and co. without looking like a gigantic nerd? You be the judge.

By Andy Myers

At events like E3 or Comic-Con, Mario T-shirts and Zelda hats come with the territory. In the last few years, however, Nintendo-themed apparel has been showing up in some pretty unlikely places and on the backs of some surprising people. We aren't exactly fashion experts here at Nintendo Power—in fact, most of us would be prime candidates for the TV show *What Not To Wear*—but we do like video games a lot, and we've seen *Zoolander* about a hundred times (for serious!). So, with our disclaimer firmly in place, we thought we'd turn a critical eye on some of the snazzy Nintendo apparel that's been sneaking into closets of late. We asked five Nintendo employees to model some of the best (and worst) game gear of all time.



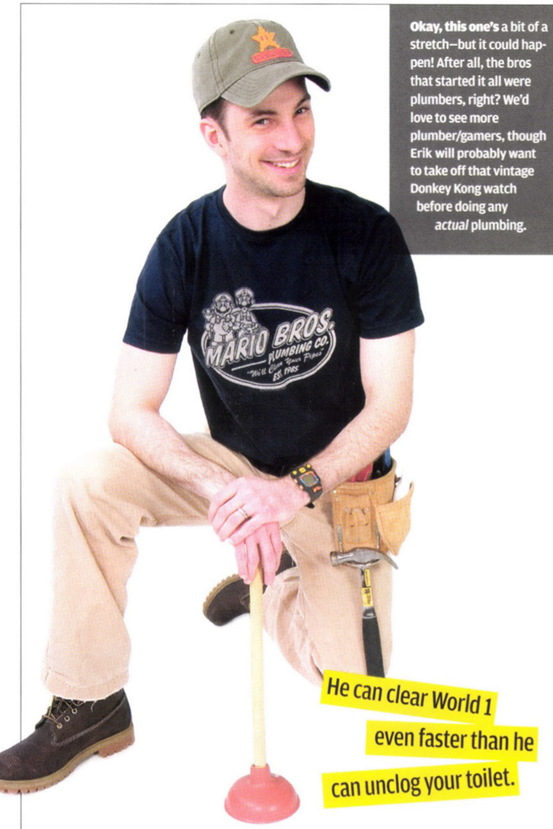
Erin's get-up is all about the old school, from the super-cute Yoshi shirt to the belt featuring the Konami code. Of course, the code on the belt is incorrect, but that's what Classified Info is for, right?



In the Back Pocket

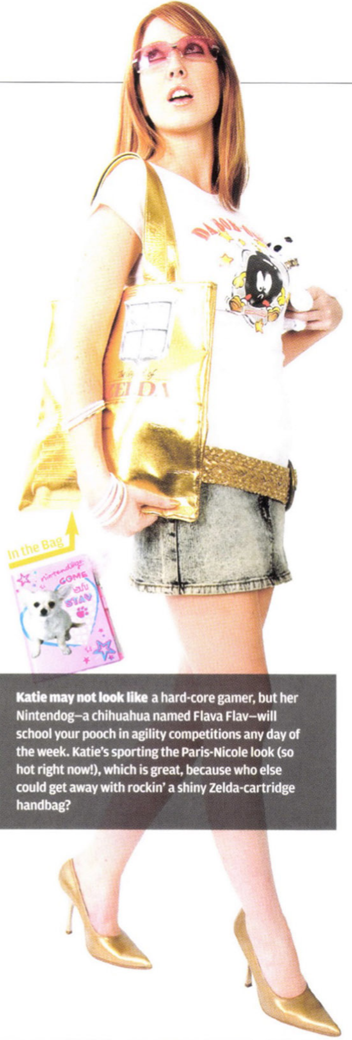
His outfit doesn't scream "video games," but Eric manages to bring the Zelda love regardless. The shirt and hoodie are awesome, but our favorite item is the gold-foiled Zelda wallet in Eric's pocket—it's sure to catch the attention of the cashier when he purchases Phantom Hourglass.

Photos by Jim Catechi



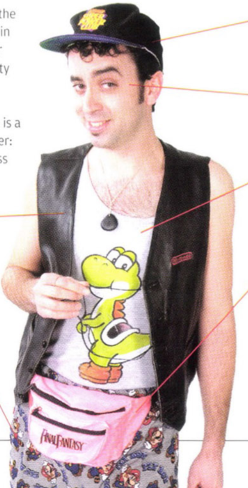
Okay, this one's a bit of a stretch—but it could happen! After all, the bros that started it all were plumbers, right? We'd love to see more plumber/gamers, though Erik will probably want to take off that vintage Donkey Kong watch before doing any *actual* plumbing.

He can clear World 1 even faster than he can unclog your toilet.



Katie may not look like a hard-core gamer, but her Nintendog—a chihuahua named Flava Flav—will school your pooch in agility competitions any day of the week. Katie's sporting the Paris-Nicole look (so hot right now!), which is great, because who else could get away with rockin' a shiny Zelda-cartridge handbag?

Some folks can pull off the fanny-pack look (people in the Linux community, for example), but we're pretty sure that the leather vest/jammies/hairy chest/fanny pack combo is a fashion no-no. (Disclaimer: Cory doesn't usually dress like this . . . *at work*.)



This piece of Killer Instinct swag is fairly difficult to come by, unless you frequent flea markets. On the moon. In an alternate universe.

Fashion 101: jammies are for nighttime, regular pants are for daytime.

Thanks for representin', but the hat's gotta go.

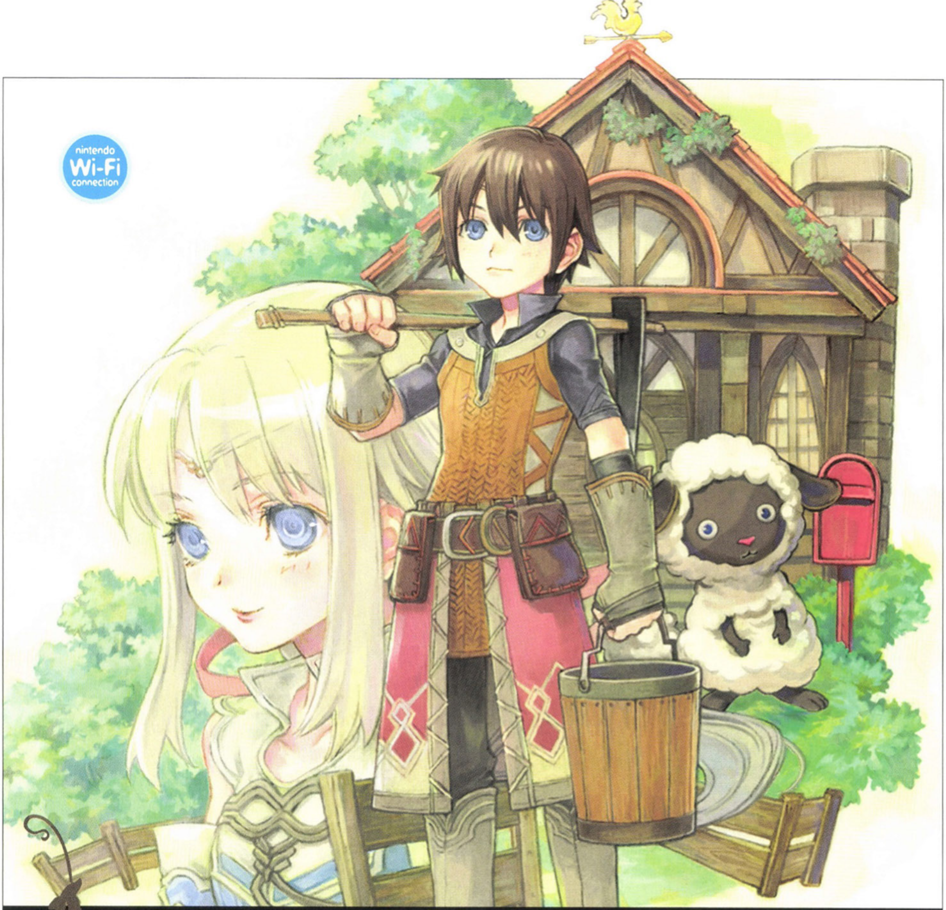
"What's up, ladies? You wanna come over and watch *The Wizard* on DVD?"

This undershirt would actually be pretty cool on its own. Here . . . not so much.

FINAL FANTASY was popular in the early '90s, and so were neon pink and fanny packs. A fusion of the two phenomena led to the birth of this gem.

Where Can I Find This Stuff?

The products featured here are some of our favorites, but they barely scratch the surface of what's available. There's a ton of Nintendo-related gear out there—you just have to find it! Retail outlets such as **Hot Topic** or **WalMart** are a good place to start. Your best bet, though, is to look online. A handful of items from this feature, such as the NES belt and the Zelda T-shirt, are currently available for purchase on **www.hottopic.com**, and almost everything else can be found at sites such as **www.myteespot.com** or **www.eBay.com**. Vintage items such as the FINAL FANTASY fanny pack and the Donkey Kong watch may be difficult to track down, but isn't the hunt part of the fun?



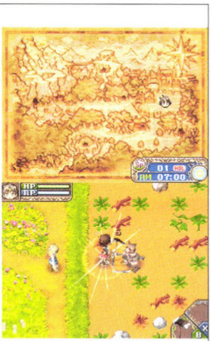
Against the Grain

With 10 years of farming under its belt, the Harvest Moon series changes direction for its wildest season yet in **Rune Factory: A Fantasy Harvest Moon** for DS.

By Andy Myers

© 2007 Natsume Inc. © 2007 MARVELOUS Interactive Inc.

Growing crops and raising animals aren't exactly the most exciting activities in the world—unless you're playing Harvest Moon. The long-running series has always had a knack for making farm life seem fun without all the bells and whistles of a conventional RPG. But after 10 years and more than 10 games, the series' creators have decided to spice up the franchise by transforming the familiar farmland into a fantasy realm complete with swords, spells, and monsters. Join us for an in-depth look at the new face of Harvest Moon, and what we believe to be one of the best-looking games yet on DS.



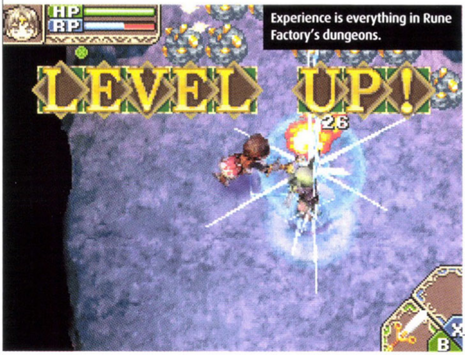
Adventurers Wanted

It won't take long to realize that Rune Factory isn't your typical Harvest Moon game. As soon as you turn it on, you're greeted with a lengthy anime intro that sets the scene for an older, fantasy-infused experience. And that's before you even reach the title screen. From Rune Factory's grown-up art style and 3-D polygonal graphics (a vast improvement over Harvest Moon DS) to its fleshed-out story with voiced-over dialogue, it's clear that developer Marvelous has gone to great lengths to produce a game that will surprise fans. "I'd say [the game appeals] not only to a more mature audience, but also to those who are into fantasy RPGs," explains producer Yoshifumi Hashimoto. "We also hope that Rune Factory attracts players who might have played a Harvest Moon game a long time ago and makes them curious enough to pick this game up and try playing it."

In the Beginning

The game begins with your arrival in Kardia, a small town located in the Kingdom of Norad. You'll first be asked to choose a name—not so much to follow in Harvest Moon tradition, but because you have amnesia, so you can't remember your real name. Before long, a girl named Mist will show up and offer you some farming tools—a hoe and a watering can—as well as a place to live. While Mist is showing you around your new home, the game takes an interesting turn—a monster suddenly appears in a nearby field. You must take up your hoe and engage the beast in battle. When the dust settles, Mist will explain that monsters are not from this world, and that defeating them in battle sends their spirits back to their homeland. With your first battle behind you, it's time to settle in and begin your adventure in Kardia.

> **"I'd say [the game appeals] not only to a more mature audience, but also to those who are into fantasy RPGs."** Yoshifumi Hashimoto, producer



Experience is everything in Rune Factory's dungeons.

Cave-Crawling

The battle in the field is only a small taste of what lies ahead. Fighting monsters is a huge element of Rune Factory. Cave entrances leading to monster-infested dungeons are scattered around the outskirts of Kardia, but you can't just jump right in to the action—each cave requires a pass for entry, which you'll need to earn by fulfilling certain farming requirements. Once you've plowed 100 plots on your field, for instance, the town mayor will issue you a pass to the first dungeon, Carmite Cave. The cave is littered with machines that spawn monsters continuously. Every machine must be destroyed for you to reach the cave's boss lair, where you'll go up against a massive demon that's much tougher than the other cave dwellers.

The action in Rune Factory's caves is all about hacking away with your weapon, whether it's a sword, a spear, or a gardening implement. Eventually you'll learn spells such as Inferno and Cure, and acquire items such as the sleeping bag that will help you survive a dungeon's depths. Fighting is just one aspect of the game, but don't expect it to be watered-down compared to a traditional action-RPG. Rune Factory is as deep a dungeon crawler as they come, and you'll need strategy and stamina to make it through the caves in one piece.

TIDBITS THAT BITE!

5 Surprises

For the Harvest Moon enthusiast, some of Rune Factory's content will come as a bit of a shock. Here are five very non-Harvest-Moon-like elements you'll encounter during your life on the farm.

A Plot

A hero with amnesia, a mysterious girl, a struggle between empires—that's a lot to keep track of while you're watering crops.

Monsters

Say goodbye to cows and sheep and the like; Rune Factory is all about the mythical beasts.

Weapons

Trade that hoe for a sword, farmer—you've got some dungeon hacking to do!

Magic

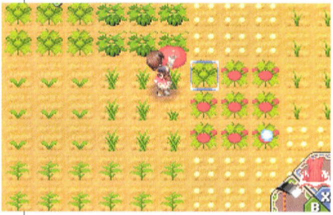
There has always been a magical element to Harvest Moon, but now you can actually cast spells.

Boss Battles

No, you won't be up against a killer tomato. You'll fight a grisly demon at the end of each dungeon.

KNOW YOUR ROOTS

Even with a drastic makeover and a whole new style of play, Rune Factory is still very much a Harvest Moon game. In fact, you're never forced to fight monsters—you could spend all your time on the farm if you really wanted to. "The fantasy world of Rune Factory enables players to live a life where they not only battle monsters and follow a storyline, but also grow crops and befriend villagers," tells Hashimoto. "It is this ordinary aspect of life (growing crops, making friends) that sets Rune Factory apart from other fantasy games."



> “It is this ordinary aspect of life (growing crops, making friends) that sets Rune Factory apart from other fantasy games.”

Work and Play

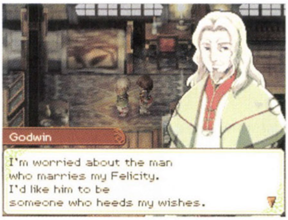
From a farming standpoint, Rune Factory is every bit as deep as previous Harvest Moon games. Starting with spring, you'll play through four seasons in a year, harvesting crops to make a living. Of course, there are plenty of other ways to make money—fishing, mining, and chopping wood to name a few—but growing crops is the crux of the game. As soon as you're set loose in Kardia, you'll have a massive, overgrown field available to you. The more plots you can clear on the field by pulling weeds and chopping up tree trunks and such, the more room you'll have for growing crops. You're responsible for tilling the soil, buying, planting, and watering seeds, and finally harvesting crops once they're ripe.

It Takes a Village

Slacking off will get you nowhere in Rune Factory. Farming may sound like a chore, but it's all part of what makes the game so fun. "One reason why the series has been so successful is the fundamental message of 'hard work is rewarded'," says Hashimoto. Still, if you get too fixated on routine, you may end up missing out on items and information that can drastically increase your productivity. Frequent trips to the many fine establishments around town will not only give you a chance to get to know the locals; it will often inspire them to donate an item or a tool to your cause. You'll always start with a weak, low-level version of a tool, which you can upgrade by visiting Kardia's blacksmith. Having the right tool for the job can make all the difference when working the field.

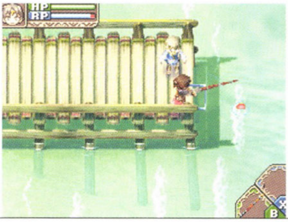
Getting to know the folks around town has other benefits, as well. Everyone in Kardia has a friendship rating and a love rating, which you can check anytime in your menu. You'll need to learn the likes and dislikes of the individual townspeople, and give gifts accordingly. Anyone can become your friend, and when they do you'll gain advantages such as unlimited access to their homes. A few of Kardia's lovely ladies may even fall in love with you—and when your sweetheart's love meter reaches its fullest, she will marry you.

Friendship and marriage have long been a part of the Harvest Moon series, but in Rune Factory the whole system has a completely different feel due to the mature art style and the entirely new cast. Personalities are stronger, and the bonds that you can form in Rune Factory's robust world seem more meaningful. It's this open-ended, life-simulating atmosphere that makes the game tick. Hashimoto concurs: "Although Rune Factory is a fantasy world where players battle and befriend monsters, at the core it is a farming life."



Godwin

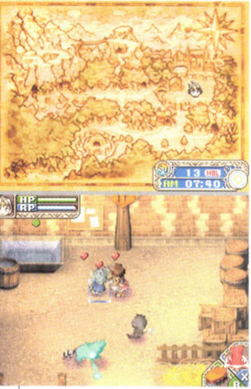
I'm worried about the man
who marries my Felicity.
I'd like him to be
someone who heeds my wishes.



Monsters, magic, turnips—it's all in a day's work.

THE HOE AND THE SWORD

So there's farming, and there's fighting; how do these two drastically different activities come together? Rune Factory does an outstanding job of balancing them, and much of what you do on the farm or in the village affects your performance in a dungeon. As Hashimoto puts it, "For those players that might not have leveled up enough and find a certain dungeon difficult to complete, they can till the soil [and] plant and water crops, which in turn will help them complete the dungeon."



Monster Party

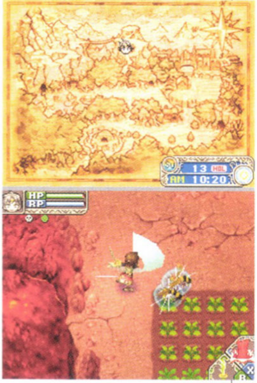
In turn, performing well in a dungeon can increase your productivity on the farm. Fighting monsters is the easiest way to level up your character stats, and the higher your level, the more farm work you can get done in a day. But fighting isn't the only thing you can do with monsters—you can also catch them! Once you receive the Pet Gloves from a townie named Tabatha, you can attempt to capture the monsters you encounter in caves. Captured monsters live in monster huts (which you must build on your property), and they behave similarly to the way livestock did in previous Harvest Moon titles. They must be fed, for instance, and certain ones can even be milked or sheared! Eventually you'll find a brush that allows you to groom your monsters to increase their affection for you. But the real benefit to owning monsters is that each one has a different set of skills. Some creatures will follow you into dungeons to aid you in battle, while others are better utilized on the farm, watering plants or even harvesting ripened crops in your stead.

Dungeon Farming

The line between dungeon life and farm life is further blurred when you start growing crops in dungeons. Every cave has a handful of lots that contain fertile soil, and there you can plant and harvest crops just like you can on your farm. The conditions are a bit more difficult, though—sometimes you'll have to fend off monsters while farming, and water can be more difficult to come by. But the big advantage to farming in a dungeon is that the environment is unaffected by seasonal changes. On the farm, all your seasonal crops die when a season's 30-day cycle is up, but in a dungeon you can harvest crops from one seed forever.

A Fresh Start

After spending a few seasons with the game, we know one thing for sure: fans will not be disappointed. "In the end we created a pseudo Harvest Moon game, where fans will recognize some familiar elements but become engrossed in a new world," remarks Hashimoto. Rune Factory marks an exciting new chapter for an already proven series, and the fighting element only makes it that much more compelling.



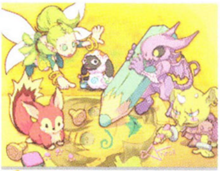
We've just scratched the surface of Rune Factory. The game offers countless things to do and contains so many nuances that only playing it yourself will do it justice—and you'll be able to do just that when the game launches this summer. "It is due to all the loyal support we have received over the years that we tried something a little different," continues Hashimoto. "And hopefully with our fans' help we will keep challenging ourselves to make more refreshing and fun games in the future."

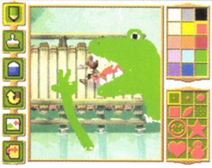
> "In the end we created a pseudo Harvest Moon game, where fans will recognize some familiar elements but become engrossed in a new world."

WI-FI IN THE STICKS

Tools of the Trade

By visiting a giant seashell on the town beach, you can access Rune Factory's Wi-Fi feature, which allows you to trade items and screenshots over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection for some interesting benefits. If you exchange seeds, for instance, you'll make more money off the harvested crops. And according to Hashimoto, it'll be possible to unlock an additional love interest using the feature.





Capture the Moment

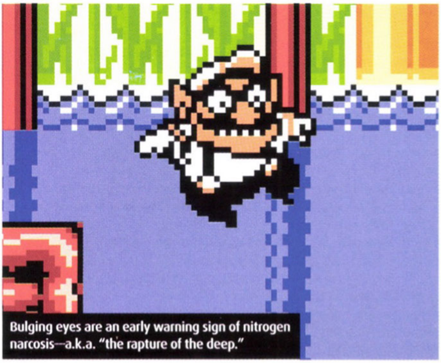
Almost anywhere in the game, you can press the L and Select Buttons simultaneously to snap a shot of the action. You can then edit the screenshot with Rune Factory's robust set of drawing tools before sharing it with friends over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.

WARIO LAND 3

Wario, take me away from all this platforming death.

WARIO LAND 3
GAME BOY COLOR
ONLY FOR GAME BOY COLOR
E
Nintendo

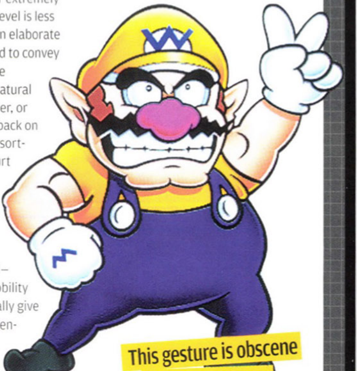
PLATFORM: GAME BOY COLOR
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
RELEASE DATE: MAY 2000
COVERED IN ISSUES: 121, 128, 132, 133, 138, 142, 143
LIVES REQUIRED TO BEAT GAME: 1

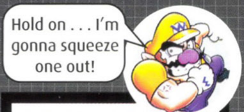

Bulging eyes are an early warning sign of nitrogen narcosis—a.k.a. "the rapture of the deep."

Death is the easy way out for game designers. As characters struggle to accomplish an objective—princess rescue, the defeat of an anthropomorphic despot, the extermination of an alien civilization—it's expedient to put their lives on the line. The core challenge of the gameplay is simply to keep characters alive while driving them forward. The try-die-repeat convention became so common that it seemed to define the platformer genre . . . until Wario came along. Wario was—for a short time, anyway—a revolutionary platforming star. You could burn him, freeze him, crush him, zombify him, and inflate him—he would not die. In Wario Land 3, the indestructible antihero came into his own as a 2-D platforming superstar when the genre was drowning in a steady stream of crap. Though the game didn't break much ground that hadn't been tilled by Wario Land 2, it expanded and improved the earlier game's design concepts—so it can rightfully be called the finest Wario platformer ever made.

The perfunctory back story is that Wario is employed by a shadowy figure who requires five music boxes to regain power over a miniaturized kingdom. The overworld is divided into four areas that each contain a variety of levels Wario can unlock. A day/night cycle shifts each time you exit a level, which allows you to access the levels at different times of day (some change dramatically at night). It all sounds straightforward enough—until you enter a level.

Deathless platforming sounds like a simple idea, but it calls for extremely clever level design. Each level is less an obstacle course than an elaborate plumbing system designed to convey Wario away from desirable objects. If you screw up, natural forces like quicksand, water, or electricity will knock you back on your heels. The bizarre assortment of enemies won't hurt Wario, but they will transform him or somehow alter his status. The transformations are often the key to advancing through a level—though they limit your mobility in various ways, they usually give you a new ability as compensation. Zombie Wario, for example, is annoyingly slow but he can fall through certain narrow blocks that might otherwise keep you from an item. Similarly, Flat Wario, though crushed to resemble a wobbling pancake, can flutter into tight spots. Horrible disfigurement has rarely had such a positive outcome. That's the Wario I love: taking lemons and making lemonade. —DREW W.

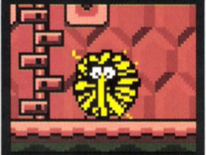

This gesture is obscene in some cultures.


Hold on . . . I'm gonna squeeze one out!

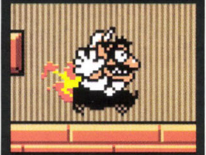
THE PAIN! THE PAIN!

Part of the fun of Wario Land 3 is watching the protagonist suffer. Who could resist chuckling when Wario is running in panic as flames engulf his body? In industry circles, that type of thing is known as "comic mischief." Because you may have trouble finding the game for yourself, here's a gallery of some notable transformations.

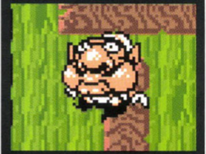
BALL OF YARN WARIO



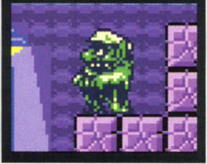
FLAMING WARIO



PUFFY WARIO



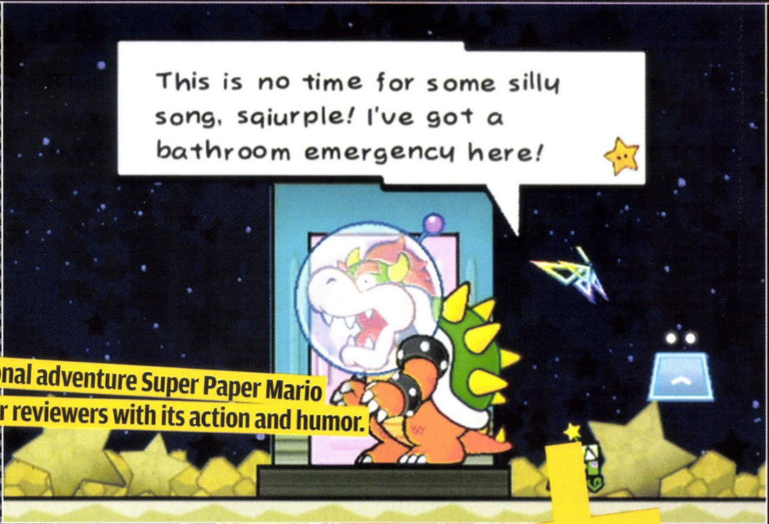
ZOMBIE WARIO



Have a favorite classic game you'd like to see revisited?
Send us your requests—we'll consider them for a future installment of Playback.
pulse@nintendopower.com

REVIEWS

In-depth reviews of the latest games


This is no time for some silly song, sqiurple! I've got a bathroom emergency here!

Multi-dimensional adventure Super Paper Mario flattens our reviewers with its action and humor.

Black pepper

Cooking Mama: Cook Off, Medal of Honor: Vanguard, and more.

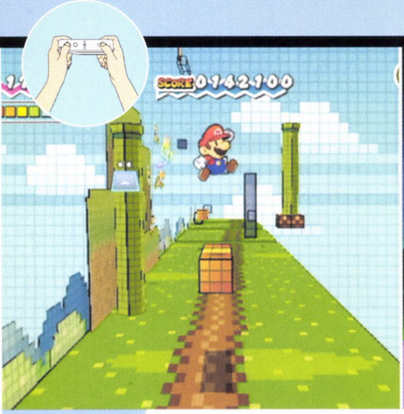
101
Wii control lets you get a grip in the world of The Godfather: Blackhand Edition.

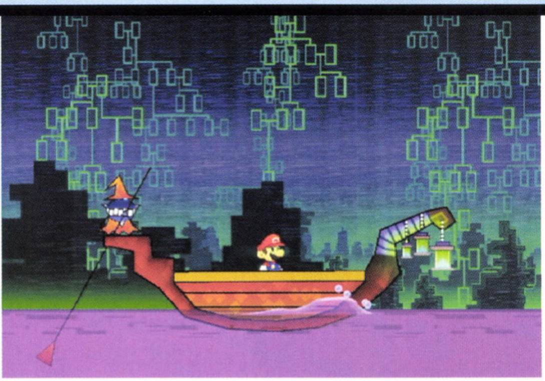
GEODUDE
BIBAREL
59/59
FIGHT
BAG
RUN
POKéMON

What will BIBAREL do?

102
A legendary adventure comes to the DS in Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl.

104
A FINAL FANTASY stalwart gets a starring role in Chocobo Tales.





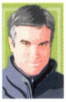
SEEMS A BIT FLAT

EVERYTHING LOOKS GOOD ON PAPER

SUPER PAPER MARIO

RATING: 9.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**



The first two Paper Mario games occupy a bittersweet spot in the Nintendo universe. Both are excellent, though easy, RPGs that have more in common with the Square-Nintendo coproduction, Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars (for SNES) than with any of the "core" Mario titles. Both also arrived late (and with little fanfare) in their respective systems' life cycles. As a result, neither game received the attention it deserved. For a time, it looked like Super Paper Mario would be doomed to the same fate—a great title released in the waning days of the GameCube and lost in the maelstrom of next-gen hype. Then it mysteriously disappeared off the radar for months—before returning to the release list as a Wii exclusive. The surprise is that SPM is a perfect fit on the new console—a rare gem that celebrates the past while providing a new experience. It also serves up red meat to longtime Mario fans while offering noobs a gentle invitation to more-complex gaming.

Unlike the first two Paper Mario games, SPM is not an "action RPG," but a groundbreaking platformer-RPG hybrid. Much ado has been made over the game's fast pace and platforming elements, but I never found that the platforming overwhelmed the story elements or vice versa. The delicate balance between the two offsets some of the tedium that can can take hold in either genre—the conversations never drag on, and neither does the jumping. It helps that both the story *and* the game design are compelling and fresh.

After a short introductory sequence in the Mushroom Kingdom, the game transports the player to a bizarre dimension governed by counter-intuitive physical laws. The main villains, too, are completely new to the Mario universe: Count Bleck and his cronies are a bunch of geometric jerks intent on acting out the apocalyptic prophesies written in a grim book called the *Dark Prognositcus*. As luck would have it, a rebuttal to that dire tome also exists—a *Light Prognosticus* that envisions a happier ending, thanks to a portly man in overalls. With the help of a wizard named Merlon and a few other like-minded individuals, Mario sets off on an adventure to find eight Pure Hearts (found in eight discrete chapters) that can be used to defeat Bleck's Chaos Heart before a giant vortex swallows the universe. Along the way, Mario is joined by Peach, Bowser, and Luigi—all of whom have special abilities that you'll need to reach your final confrontation with Bleck. You'll also receive help from a dozen creatures known as Pixls, who afford new abilities to Mario and company. Soon your little crew will grow into a small army, but Mario remains the star of the adventure for a very important reason—only he can move between the second and third dimensions.

Mario's nifty trick is also the gimmick that moves SPM into sublime, uncharted gaming territory. When you hit the A Button, the game world rotates to show you the hidden 3-D elements in Mario's 2-D platforming universe—much as turning a shoebox diorama reveals the tape and toothpicks used to prop up paper houses and trees. Intelligent Systems makes the most of the the level-design opportunities offered by the new gameplay mechanic: portions of the background turn out to be bridges in the foreground; solid barriers suddenly become stairs or doors; unstoppable enemies can be rendered harmless in a heartbeat. You will be continually surprised and amused by how the shopworn conventions of 2-D platforming are both subverted and refreshed by a simple shift in perspective. The retro-cool feel of the game is further enhanced by the use of the Wii remote turned on its side—using the Control Pad to move is a nice nod to 8-Bit Mario games, while the motion-sensor-activated acrobatic attacks and infrared object identification firmly place the game in 2007.

There are dozens of strong reasons to recommend the game, but a couple of flaws could put off veterans and novices alike. The game isn't difficult—completing the main storyline will be an easy task for a savvy gamer. There are plenty of side quests—some of them brutally hard—to keep you occupied, but you'll be disappointed if you're looking for old-school challenges. On the flipside (no pun intended), the constant menu selection and the number of options late in the game could become unruly for unseasoned players.

Despite those possible drawbacks, Super Paper Mario offers a deep, innovative experience that shouldn't be missed. For a paper adventure, it's amazingly solid.
—DREW W.

HP 30/30
SCORE 0165330
COINS 264

Mario takes a break to watch Captain N reruns.

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHO'S YOUR FAVORITE GAMING LUMINARY?

Interviews with Shigeru Miyamoto, Tomonobu Itagaki, and other luminaries got us to thinking what game maker our reviewers admire most.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

Hideo Kojima. Nothing pulls me into a game like the worlds he's created for Metal Gear and Snatcher.

CHRIS SHEPPERD

I'm going with Igarashi. He might take some heat for making too many similar games, but when those games are so fun and beautiful, it's hard to criticize the man.

ANDY MYERS

Though Gunpei Yokoi (creator of Metroid, Kid Icarus, and Game Boy) passed away in '97, his work continues to influence game developers today.

GEORGE SINFIELD

Overseeing both hardware design (Nintendo's consoles, battery backup in cartridges, the analog stick) and game development (Punch-Out!), Genyo Takeda is the most versatile developer in the business.

STEVE THOMASON

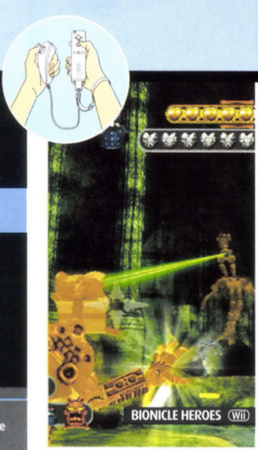
How can you *not* go with Miyamoto? The man created The Legend of Zelda series, which consistently delivers some of the best experiences of each hardware generation.

DREW WILLIAMS

I'm going to be weird and not pick a designer who's name ends with a vowel. Will Wright has consistently pushed gaming into new, compelling territory.

GIANCARLO VARANINI

I can't really pick one person, but if Miyamoto, Kojima, Inafune, Mikami, Anaba, Kamiya, Okamoto, and Igarashi had some weird love child, it'd be him or her.

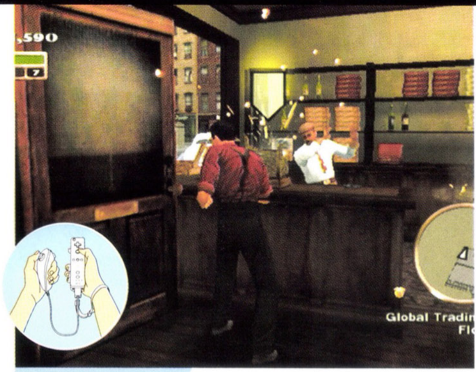


BIONICLE HEROES

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: Traveller's Tales
DEVELOPER: Eidos
ESRB: Everyone 10+

Bionicle Heroes is one of those games that will constantly have you asking "why." Why does every level seem identical to the last? Why is the gameplay almost exactly like LEGO *Star Wars*, minus the fun? Why can't I shoot in the direction I'm pointing? And finally, why should I play the Wii version rather than the GameCube version? The Wii's third-person shooter is essentially identical to the GameCube title from a few months back; the only real difference is that you'll control the camera using the Wii remote via an on-screen reticle. Combine this feature with the game's autolock aiming, and you have a frustrating and non-intuitive control scheme that makes that last question rather difficult to answer. It's a shame that the gameplay is so troublesome—graphically, Bionicle Heroes is one of the finest titles we've seen on Wii, full of lush environments and impressive character animations. For LEGO fans, the fact that the game exists in a LEGO world may be a bonus as well. But for those hoping for a solid, third-person action game on Wii or an experience that goes beyond that of the GameCube game, Bionicle Heroes doesn't fit the bill. Let's hope that future LEGO-themed titles can do better. —Andy M.



GRAND THEFT CANNOLI

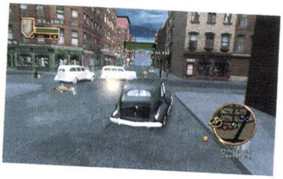
NOT QUITE COPPOLA

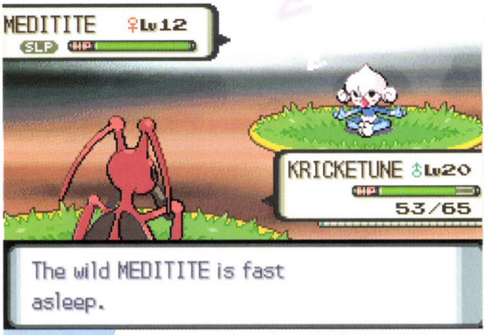
THE GODFATHER: BLACKHAND EDITION

RATING: 8.0

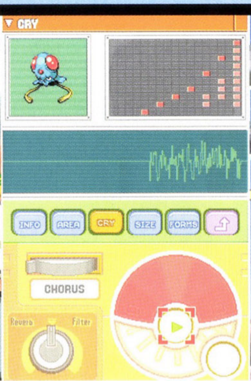
PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER: EA Redwood Shores
ESRB: Mature

At its best, The Godfather: Blackhand Edition is a finely crafted homage to one of the greatest movies of all time, supported by combat play mechanics that make you feel connected to the world of organized crime in the 1940s. At its worst, the game is a Grand Theft Auto knockoff with characters dressed in Italian fabrics. It starts off on the right foot by allowing you to be an active observer (a customizable thug in a supporting role) in some of the film's great scenes (the hit on Luca Brasi, for example) leading up to the attempt on Don Corleone's life. More movie moments follow (all the way up to the end of the first film), but the rest of the game is dominated by more-generic criminal activity, the lowest rung on the ladder being the endless extortion of funds (for "protection") from area businesses. During those lulls in the film-plot thread, you are left to drive around the city looking for action and for people to threaten—and driving in urban-sandbox games has always been problematic. In this one the developers want you to be able to get from point A to point B quickly, so your car travels much faster than the other vehicles on the road, causing you to run into other vehicles and pedestrians. That gets you into trouble with the police, which results in a shoot-out when you really just want to traverse the city. It's not terrible gameplay; it's just not particularly fitting for *The Godfather*. More appropriate are strong-arm techniques afforded by motion control. With the nunchuk and remote representing your character's hands, you can grab your targets by the lapels, punch them, headbutt them, strangle them, and even toss them through windows, all with intuitive actions. Firing weapons is similarly satisfying. The remote's pointer allows you to aim at a locked-on target's kneecaps or shoulders so you can make a statement without inflicting a fatal wound. If you don't mind sifting through GTA-style filler, Blackhand Edition's *The Godfather* ties and offer-you-can't-refuse machismo are well worth the play.
—George S.





The wild MEDITITE is fast asleep.



OOH, SHINY

HAVING A BALL

POKéMON DIAMOND AND POKéMON PEARL

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **GAME FREAK INC.**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

After months of anticipation tempered by appetizers such as Pokémon Mystery Dungeon and Pokémon Ranger, the real thing has arrived: Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl return us to the classic Pokémon gaming style. Armed with a host of new Pokémon, an expansive new world, and the functionality of the DS, Diamond and Pearl constitute the ultimate Pokémon experience. They take elements from previous games, such as Gold and Silver's day/night feature, Ruby and Sapphire's Battle Tower, and FireRed and LeafGreen's Union Rooms to offer a Pokémon experience that rounds up all the great aspects of previous games. Sometimes the games take so much from their precursors that the franchise is prohibited from going in creative new directions, but there are enough new features to keep Pokémon fans entertained for a long time.

The plot of Diamond and Pearl should be a familiar one to veterans of the Pokémon games; the names are different and the locations are new, but the story has hardly changed at all from previous titles. You're a young boy or girl from a small village called Twinleaf Town and you're setting off to become the best Pokémon Trainer in the Sinnoh region. You'll catch and raise Pokémon, challenge other Trainers, and eventually take on the Elite Four. During your journey, you'll uncover a plot to destroy the world, cooked up by a cabal named Team Galactic that's headed by evil genius Cyrus. The same ol' tale is a disappointment—with such a strong gameplay system in place, the story could've gone in any number of directions, but it travels the well-worn road of previous games. The plot also feels a little lighter than in previous games—Team Galactic's presence and purpose doesn't develop smoothly during the adventure, and the geographical path you take feels more linear than normal.

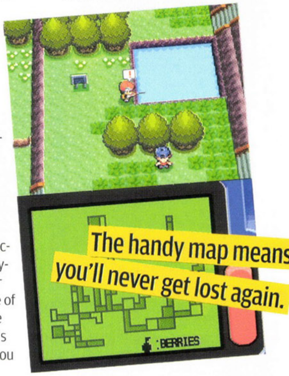
Details within the game— including the look of the new Pokémon—have improved across the board in this latest pair of games. Diamond and Pearl's creatures are doubtless the best group since Red and Blue's original 151—they have interesting designs and incorporate well with the existing Pokémon. The Legendaries look cool, there are plenty of them, and they're as tough to snag as ever. Organizing your party and looking up Pokémon in the revamped Pokédex is a breeze thanks to the touch screen, too. It takes quite a bit of gameplay and a little bit of work before you're allowed to bring in Pokémon from previous games, but the opportunity to eventually have every single creature in one game is worth the effort for hard-core Trainers.

The look and variety of the locales in the Sinnoh region is a huge improvement over previous games—you'll pass through rainy forests, snow-covered fields, and many other areas that show off the new 3-D overworld graphics. The change seems subtle until you pop in one of your GBA games for a quick comparison. However, the developers could have done even greater things with the visuals, but they chose to stick with a somewhat traditional presentation.

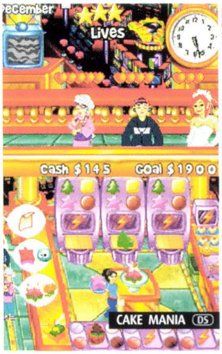
Battling is pretty much the same as it's always been— expert Trainers will really appreciate a few tweaks to the fighting system, but normal Pokémon Trainers won't feel alienated by the changes.

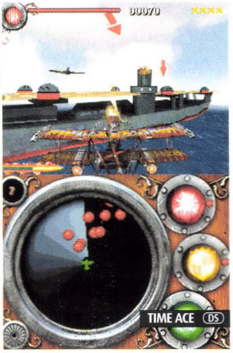
There are plenty of new moves and Abilities to shake up combat tactics, especially when it comes to weather-affecting strategies. The new moves look good, too—revamped attack animations are more compelling than ever before.

Connecting with other Trainers is where Diamond and Pearl's true innovation lies. Utilizing the DS's wireless connectivity, hooking up with other players is finally a painless endeavor (you can forget about the hassle of the GBA's game-link cables). The variety of multiplayer activities is pretty staggering—not only do you still have the traditional head-to-head trading and battling, but the chance to verbally taunt your oppenent via Wi-Fi, participate in contests, compete in the Battle Tower, and go online round out an already robust feature set. The interface with Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection is practically as simple as local wireless—it takes no time to hop online and meet up with other Trainers for impromptu battles. Throw in the Global Trade Station—a bulletin-board system for trading Pokémon around the world—and the connectivity features are pretty much unrivaled by any other DS game. You can access The Underground from any point in Sinnoh, as well. The Underground mixes single-player activities with multiplayer hijinks for plenty of fun, but it might not be everyone's cup of tea—you can't catch Pokémon down there, and you can't battle or trade with other Trainers you meet.
—**CHRIS S.**



The handy map means you'll never get lost again.





CAKE MANIA

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO**
DEVELOPER: **DIGITAL EMBRYO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Who doesn't love cake? It's moist, it's delicious, and obviously it's the focus of Cake Mania, in which you bake, frost, decorate, and serve cakes to dozens and dozens of customers. The point-and-click action is fun at first, but it gets stale awfully fast. Even though you can buy more ovens, new decorations, faster equipment, better walking shoes, and more, it doesn't change the fact that you'll see almost everything the game has to offer in about 30 minutes. Extended play is enough to send a gamer into a diabetic coma. To compound the issue, the touch-screen controls sometimes don't respond when you try to input multiple commands quickly. More variety and enhancements for this PC port would have made the DS version a lot sweeter. —**CHRIS H.**

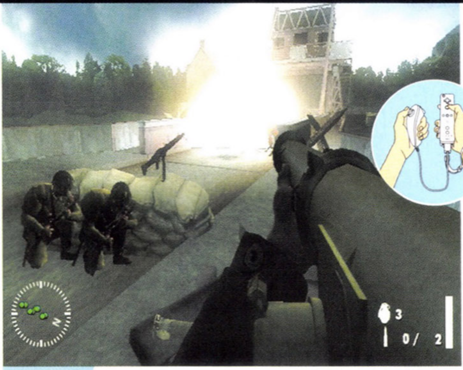
TIME ACE

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **TRAINWRECK STUDIOS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

When Konami said that Time Ace had nothing to do with their top-down shooter Time Pilot, I put on my white pants and prepared to play tennis on Victorian lawns. Alas, Time Ace is a shooter in which you travel through time and pilot a variety of airplanes. The new game has an extensive storyline attached to the action, but I have to say that I prefer the one I made up in my head to justify all the shooting in Time Pilot (it involved a stolen chihuahua with the brain of a human child). Time Ace dishes out the standard time-travel gobbledygook about chasing a villain through time, and comes complete with a love interest you pick up along the way (she sounds a bit like like Borat after he's inhaled the contents of a helium balloon). If you ignore the laughable story sequences, however, and concentrate on the flying, you should have a reasonable amount of fun as you kill wave after wave of faceless enemy pilots, tank commanders, and ship captains. Each level offers a combination of on-rails, Starfox-style attack runs interspersed with free-flying dogfights and ground assaults. Though the design is strictly paint-by-numbers—enemy squadrons come at you in manageable clusters, ground cannons must be tended to, and power-ups appear regularly to keep you healthy—the game *looks* fantastic for a 3-D shooter on the DS.

Given the blandness of the single-player experience, you'll be better off enjoying the scenery during wireless LAN multicard dogfights. The control is also quite tight, but doesn't make use of the touch screen in any way during combat—it's as shame, because the power-up icons and the large radar screen on the touch screen make stylus control seem like a no-brainer. I was also disappointed that some of the tantalizing steampunk features seen early in the game weren't developed more fully. In particular, it bothered me that the coolest-looking (and coolest-sounding) plane in the game is the tricked-out, alternate-universe biplane from the first two levels. Forget outer space—I had a lot more fun buzzing around in 1917, listening to the clickety-clack of my machine gun. —**DREW W.**



RERUNS

HISTORY REPEATS

MEDAL OF HONOR: VANGUARD

RATING: 6.0

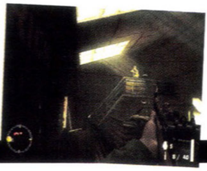
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA LOS ANGELES**
ESRB: **TEEN**

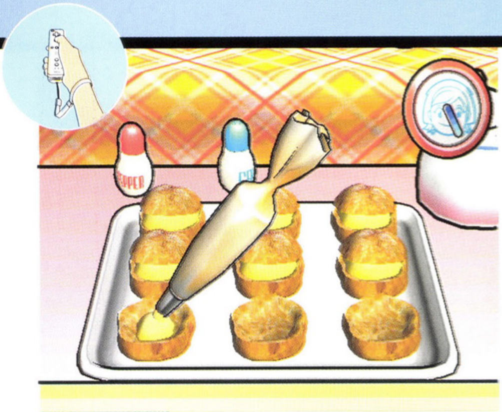
How many times have you stormed Normandy or walked through a once-beautiful town ravaged by war, only to discover the barrel of a Nazi tank staring straight at you from 20 yards away? Yes, Vanguard relies heavily on all the clichés of a World War II shooter, and what little new material it has fails to make the same impact as those now-standard genre elements once did.

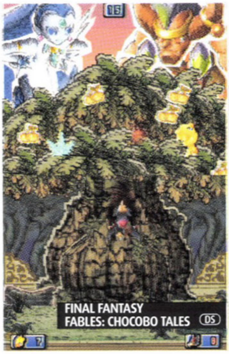
That's not to say the game doesn't have its moments. The parachuting portions in Vanguard, which make clever use of the nunchuk-and-remote combination (think parachute straps), are great, but they're either way too short or don't really capitalize on the sheer insanity of the situation. Plus, there's no substantial reward for landing in a good spot: You either land in a nice area away from enemy fire, or you don't and you're dead. Not to mention the fact that the landing zone is pretty confined as well, which is a little odd for a game focused on an army airborne division. There's just not much to it.

As for the on-the-ground fighting, there's nothing here that hasn't been done countless times in other Medal of Honor games—with the exception of the control scheme. The Wii remote and nunchuk do an excellent job of keeping you in full control of your armaments and firing position; that may not be enough as the AI tends to get the upper hand—not out of intelligence, but rather due to a hitch that doesn't let you take down an enemy that's going through a prescripted animation. In fact, most of the difficulty in Vanguard—which ramps up steeply in the last section of the game—materializes as a result of cheap tricks as opposed to clever design.

But all in all, Vanguard is a decent run-of-the-mill first-person shooter. None of the conflicts are as dramatic as those in previous games, but fairly good controls and standard split-screen multiplayer options, as well as incredible sound and music (which are a given for the series even if this particular score sounds remarkably like an episode of Lost) keep it from being just the same old chapter that you've read over and over again in the history books.
—**GIANCARLO V.**






FINAL FANTASY FABLES: CHOCOBO TALES (DS)

BACKYARD BASEBALL (GCN)

WHOA, MAMA

MM, MM, GOOD

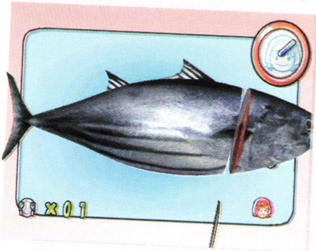
COOKING MAMA: COOK OFF

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **Majesco**
DEVELOPER: **Office Create**
ESRB: **Everyone**

Once upon a time, I wouldn't have imagined that cooking and video games could successfully go hand in hand, but the Cooking Mama series has made me a believer. Like its DS predecessor, Cooking Mama: Cook Off turns mundane culinary activities into fast, frantic, fun WarioWare-style minigames. In Cook Off's case, all the minigames revolve around creative use of the Wii remote as a virtual cooking utensil—you'll move it up and down to slice and dice vegetables, move it forward and back to carve meat, point it down and spin it to stir, shake it to add spices, twist it to pour water, tap it lightly to dust ingredients with flour, tilt it in all directions to coat a pan with butter, and a whole lot more. Every sequence of minigames is a blast, and it's always cool to see what new dishes are unlocked with each successful recipe.

Though the diverse uses of the controller give the title more gameplay variety than its DS counterpart, Cook Off lacks some of the features of the original: It doesn't have as many recipes in total, it doesn't allow you to modify your dishes partway through, it lacks the precision and tactile sensation that the DS provides, and the pacing isn't as challenging (which makes it harder to recommend to the hard-core enthusiast). More importantly, Cook Off doesn't fix the one glaring flaw of the DS game: There's still no story/career/arcade mode to sink your teeth into—just a bunch of individual recipes. On the other hand, the game does add a two-player versus mode that's loads of fun in spite of the cramped split screen. Too bad the versus-CPU mode isn't quite as successful due to frequently cheap opponent AI. Nonetheless, Cook Off serves up a hearty helping of enjoyment; if there's another sequel, hopefully the developers will get all the trimmings right. —**Chris H.**



FINAL FANTASY FABLES: CHOCOBO TALES

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Square Enix**
DEVELOPER: **Square Enix/H.A.N.D.**
ESRB: **Everyone**

Following in the footsteps of last year's surprisingly awesome Dragon Quest Heroes: Rocket Slime is another quirky DS adventure starring one of Square Enix's beloved mascots. Tasked with saving his friends and stopping a possessed tome from running amok, the fine-feathered protagonist of FINAL FANTASY Fables: Chocobo Tales must seek out and enter a series of enchanted picture books, each of which contains a touch-based minigame. In terms of mechanics, there's not much to these challenges that we haven't seen before, but the execution is a lot more interesting than in similar titles. Each of the minigames offers a FINAL FANTASY-themed take on familiar fairy tales (such as Cait Sith playing the role of the pied piper), and completing them can trigger events in the outside world or earn you new cards for use in duels (the game's boss encounters play out via a simple-yet-inoffensive card battle system). The overarching story is fairly elementary, but the writing is quite good, and at times, genuinely sweet. Because the game is aimed primarily at a younger audience, most of the required objectives are pretty easy—less-experienced players can progress through the game without frustration. The optional trials will test the skills of even the most seasoned gamer, however, and you can challenge friends to card battles and minigames via local-wireless and Wi-Fi connections.

As you'd expect from Square Enix, Chocobo Tales' production values are top notch. The game boasts an impressively smooth 3-D engine as you explore the overworld, and switches to a charming pop-up-book aesthetic during minigames and card battles. The soundtrack is equally pleasing, and hits the nostalgia chord early and often with a number of classic franchise tunes. At one point I wondered whether the game was actually any good, or if the music was simply eliciting a Pavlovian response (after all, hearing that familiar victory fanfare has coincided with some of my favorite gaming memories for well over a decade). Thankfully—for the sake of both the game's quality and my mental health—I don't think that's the case. Thought not quite the unqualified success that Rocket Slime was, Chocobo Tales serves as an endearing diversion for FINAL FANTASY fanatics, and provides an affable introduction to the franchise for newcomers. —**Steve T.**

ALSO THIS MONTH

The press materials for Ignition's **Mercury Meltdown Revolution** for Wii boast "state of the art blob physics," a strong attribute for a game that features an amorphous player-controlled character that transitions between normal and solid, slow and and fast states. You use your choice of the remote or classic controller to guide Mercury through more than 150 levels. . . . As sure as there is spring every year, there is Humongous and Atari's **Backyard Baseball**. The 2007 editions (on GCN and GBA) give us kid versions of 10 MLB superstars to start, including Albert Pujols and Alex Rodriguez, additional unlockable MLB players, and 30 fictional kid pitchers and hitters.

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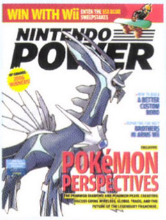
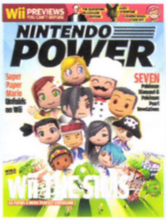
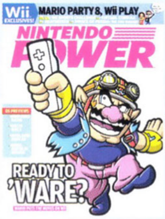


MAY 2007, VOLUME 215
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Samus Aran: Power Suit), Pearls of Wisdom (Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl), Untamed, Unmatched, Unbreakable, Unbelievable, Unescapable, Unleashed (Godzilla Unleashed), War Stories (Brothers in Arms: Double Time), Dew Process (Dewy's Adventure), 2006 Nintendo Power Awards Winners, Build a Better Robot (Custom Robo Arena), Now Your Cooking With Power (Cooking Games), Super Paper Mario: The Interview, Comeback Kid (Kid Icarus), A Legend in its Own Time (The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time), Naruto: Ninja Council, Death, Jr. and the Science Fair of Doom, Medal of Honor: Vanguard, Time Ace, Touch the Dead, Spider-Man 3, Diner Dash, Code Lyoko.



APRIL 2007, VOLUME 214
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Fox McCloud), You Are Here (MySims), You & Mii, A Matter of Perspective (Super Paper Mario), Alien Invasion (Alien Syndrome), Fun for the Whole Family (The Godfather: Blackhand Edition), Clash of the Cards (SNK vs. Capcom Cardfighter), Ring Master (Sonic and the Secret Rings), Creature Features (Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl), Pop-Up Fowl (FINAL FANTASY Fables: Chocobo Tales), Heroes of Mana, Cooking Mama: Cook Off, Mortal Kombat: Armageddon, TMNT, Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07, Escape from Bug Island, Mercury Meltdown Revolution.

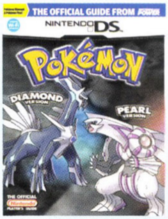
MARCH 2007, VOLUME 213
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Link), New Blue (Sonic and the Secret Rings), Better Gaming Through Science (We Create a Gamer), Grease Monkey (Diddy Kong Racing DS), Chairman of the Board (Mario Party 8), Lootin' & Tootin' (Wario: Master of Disguise), Motion Blur (SSX Blur), Sixth Sense (FINAL FANTASY VI ADVANCE), Nintendo Power Awards Nominations 2006, Super Paper Mario, TMNT, Rayman Raving Rabbids, Cake Mania, Pokémon Diamond & Pokémon Pearl, SNK vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS, Wii Play, Marvel Trading Card Game, Hotel Dusk: Room 215, Izuna: Legend of the Unemployed Ninja, Inuyasha: Secret of the Divine Jewel, Lunar Knights.



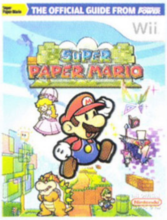
FEBRUARY 2007, VOLUME 212
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Meta Knight), Did I Just See That (WarioWare: Smooth Moves), Diddy Diddy Bang Bang (Diddy Kong Racing DS), Ordeal or No Deal (Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess), Host Your Own Wii Sports Challenge, A Climax in Crystal (FINAL FANTASY III), Return to the Throne (Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones), The Finest Fantasy (FINAL FANTASY VI Advance), Planet Nintendo (Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection), Into the Blue (Lost in Blue 2), Fire in the Sky (Heatseeker), Room Service (Hotel Dusk: Room 215), Custom Robo Arena, Konami Classic Series: Arcade Hits, Lunar Knights, Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords, Trioncube, Wario: Master of Disguise, Wii Play

JANUARY 2007, VOLUME 211
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Pikachu), All the Right Moves (WarioWare: Smooth Moves), 31 Reasons Why Wii Love the Virtual Console, Living the Hy Life (Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess), Reflections on Zelda (Eiji Aonuma interview), Five-Star Truck Test (Excite Truck), Birth of a Hedgehog (Sonic), The Path of Ruin (Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin), A Full Belly (Kirby: Squeak Squad), Court of Appeal (Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice for All), 10 Ways to Enjoy Your Island Getaway (Yoshi's Island DS), NP's Holiday Travel Guide (DS Travel tips), Hotel Dusk: Room 215, Winning Eleven: Pro Evolution Soccer 2007, *Star Wars*: Lethal Alliance, Inuyasha: Secret of the Divine Jewel, Meteos: Disney Magic, Super Swing Golf, Spectrobes, Izuna: Legend of the Unemployed Ninja

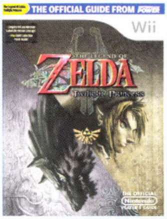
OFFICIAL NINTENDO PLAYER'S GUIDES



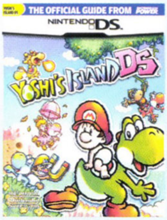
POKéMON DIAMOND AND POKéMON PEARL



SUPER PAPER MARIO



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS



YOSHI'S ISLAND DS

NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.

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- FINAL FANTASY V ADVANCE
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS ADVENTURES
- METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES
- PIKMIN 2
- POKéMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS

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- FIRE EMBLEM: THE SACRED STONES (GBA)
- FINAL FANTASY IV ADVANCE
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP (GBA)
- MARIO & LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME (DS)
- MARIO & LUIGI: SUPERSTAR SAGA (GBA)
- METROID PRIME HUNTERS
- METROID: ZERO MISSION (GBA)
- POKéMON EMERALD (GBA)
- POKéMON RANGER
- POKéMON MYSTERY DUNGEON: BLUE/RED RESCUE TEAM

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[ARCHIVE]

MOTION CONTROL 2.0

Just a few months after the Wii launch new releases are already exploring frontiers in motion control. Archive entry SSX Blur (EA, 8.5) uses the nunchuk's motion sensitivity (like no other game before it) to enhance Control Stick-triggered steering, leaving you the remote to execute air tricks. Flight sim Heatseaker (Codemasters, 7.5) employs the remote's pointer to direct the flight of its fighters. We're looking forward to seeing more innovations in Wii control as developers test the boundaries.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.
• INDICATES WI-FI COMPATIBLE

Wii

The Ant Bully	N/A	Midway	211	E10+
Avatar: The Last Airbender	N/A	THQ	211	E10+
The Barnyard	N/A	THQ	211	E10+
Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII	7.0	Ubisoft	215	T
Call of Duty 3	6.5	Activision	211	T
Cars	N/A	THQ	211	E
Chicken Little: Ace in Action	7.0	Buena Vista	212	E10+
Cosmic Family	N/A	Ubisoft	215	E
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 2	7.0	Atari	211	T
Elebits	7.5	Konami	212	E
Excite Truck	8.5	Nintendo	211	E
Far Cry: Vengeance	4.0	Ubisoft	212	M
The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy	N/A	Midway	211	E10+
GT Pro Series	5.0	Ubisoft	211	E
Happy Feet	4.5	Midway	211	E
Heatseeker	7.5	Codemasters	215	T
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	N/A	Sierra	212	E10+
Kororinpa: Marble Mania	7.0	Hudson Soft/Konami	215	E
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	9.5	Nintendo	211	T
Madden NFL 07	8.5	Electronic Arts	211	E
Marvel: Ultimate Alliance	8.0	Activision	211	T
Meet the Robinsons	6.5	Buena Vista	215	E10+
Metal Slug Anthology	8.0	SNK Playmore USA	211	T
Monster 4x4: World Circuit	6.5	Ubisoft	211	E
Need for Speed: Carbon	6.0	Electronic Arts	212	E10+
Open Season	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E10+
Prince of Persia: Rival Swords	7.0	Ubisoft	215	T
Rampage: Total Destruction	6.5	Midway	211	E10+
Rapala Tournament Fishing	N/A	Activision	212	E
Rayman Raving Rabbids	7.5	Ubisoft	211	E
Red Steel	8.0	Ubisoft	211	T
Sonic and the Secret Rings	8.5	Sega	214	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	7.0	THQ	211	E
SSX Blur	8.5	Electronic Arts	215	E
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz	8.5	Sega	211	E
Super Swing Golf	7.5	Tecmo	212	E
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz	8.5	Sega	211	E
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	8.5	Electronic Arts	215	E
TMNT	5.0	Konami	215	E10+
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	6.0	Ubisoft	211	M
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	212	E10+
Trauma Center: Second Opinion	8.5	Atlus	211	T
WarioWare: Smooth Moves	9.0	Nintendo	212	E
Wii Play	7.0	Nintendo	213	E
Wii Sports	8.0, 8.5	Nintendo	211	E
Wing Island	5.5	Hudson Soft/Konami	215	E
World Series of Poker: Tournament of Champions	N/A	Activision	212	T

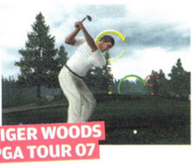
NINTENDO GAMECUBE

2006 FIFA World Cup	7.5	Electronic Arts	204	E
The Ant Bully	5.0	Midway	208	E10+
Avatar: The Last Airbender	7.0	THQ	210	E
The Barnyard	6.0	THQ	207	E10+
Baten Kaitos Origins	8.0	Nintendo	209	T
Bionicle Heroes	5.0	Eidos	211	E10+
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
Cars	6.5	THQ	206	E
FIFA 07	8.0	Electronic Arts	210	E
Flushed Away	6.5	D3PA	210	E
The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy	6.5	Midway	210	E10+
Happy Feet	N/A	Midway	211	E
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	5.5	Sierra	209	E10+
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	9.5	Nintendo	212	T
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	7.5	LucasArts	209	E10+
Madden NFL 07	9.0	Electronic Arts	208	E
Major League Baseball 2K6	7.0, 6.5,6.0	2K Sports	205	E
Meet the Robinsons	N/A	Buena Vista	215	E10+
Monster House	6.5	THQ	207	E10+
Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2	7.5	Tomy/D3PA	210	T
Need For Speed: Carbon	7.5	Electronic Arts	211	E10+
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
One Piece: Grand Adventure	5.5	Namco Bandai	208	T
One Piece: Pirates' Carnival	5.5	Namco Bandai	209	E
Open Season	8.0	Ubisoft	209	E10+
Over the Hedge	6.0	Activision	205	E10+
Pac-Man World Rally	5.5	Namco Bandai	208	E
Radio Allergy	5.0	O~3	215	E
Rampage: Total Destruction	6.5	Midway	204	E10+
Shrek Smash N' Crash Racing	N/A	Activision	213	E10+
The Sims 2 Pets	6.5	Electronic Arts	211	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	8.5	THQ	210	E
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	5.5	Sega	208	E
Teen Titans	6.0	Majesco	204	E10+
TMNT	N/A	Konami	214	E10+
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	4.5	Ubisoft	210	M
Tomb Raider: Legend	7.5	Eidos	211	T
X-Men: The Official Game	6.5	Activision	205	T

NINTENDO DS

2006 FIFA World Cup	7.0	Electronic Arts	204	E
Alex Rider: Stormbreaker	4.5	THQ	208	T
Arthur and the Invisibles	N/A	Atari	213	E
Avatar: The Last Airbender	6.5	THQ	210	E
Bionicle Heroes	N/A	Eidos	211	T
• Bomberman Land Touch!	7.0	Atlus	211	E
Brain Boost: Beta Wave	N/A	Majesco	212	E
Brain Boost: Gamma Wave	N/A	Majesco	212	E
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
Break 'Em All	7.0	D3PA	206	E
Bubble Bobble Revolution	6.0	Codemasters	208	E
Cars	5.5	THQ	206	E
Cartoon Network Racing	N/A	The Game Factory	213	E
• Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin	9.0	Konami	211	T
Catz	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E
Charlotte's Web	6.0	Sega	211	E
Chicken Little: Ace in Action	6.5	Buena Vista	210	E
Children of Mana	6.5	Nintendo	210	E10+
• Clubhouse Games	7.0	Nintendo	209	E
• Contact	6.5	Atlus	209	E10+
Cooking Mama	7.0	Majesco	209	E
Crash Boom Bang!	4.0	Sierra	209	E
• Custom Robo Arena	7.5	Nintendo	215	E10+
Deep Labyrinth	6.0	Atlus	208	E10+
• Diddy Kong Racing DS	7.5	Nintendo	213	E
• Digimon World DS	N/A	Namco Bandai	212	E
Dino Master	5.5	Majesco	205	E
Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long—Attack of the Dark Dragon	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E
Dogz	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E
Dragon quest Heroes: Rocket Slime	9.0	Square Enix	208	E
Elite Beat Agents	9.5	Nintendo	210	E10+
Eragon	N/A	Vivendi	211	T
F-24 Stealth Fighter	3.5	Majesco	215	E10+
FIFA 07	N/A	Electronic Arts	210	E
• Final Fantasy III	8.0	Square Enix	211	E10+
Flushed Away	N/A	D3PA	210	E
Fossil League D.T.C.	N/A	D3PA	214	E
Freedom Wings	6.0	Natsume	207	E10+
Full Metal Alchemist: Dual Sympathy	7.0	Destineer	212	T
Guilty Gear Dust Strikers	7.0	Majesco	204	T
Gunpey DS	6.5	Namco BAndai	210	E
Harlem Globetrotters World Tour	N/A	DSI	211	E
Harvest Moon DS	6.0	Natsume	208	E

REVIEWER NOTES



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 07

There's a lot of stuff to like about Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07, including Wii controls that, once you get the hang of them, make you feel like you're really golfing. Unfortunately, the visuals aren't nearly up to par, and occasionally they can throw off your game—bad grass texturing and an unruly camera can make shots more difficult than they should be. The graphics are a step back from last year's GameCube version. No excuse. —Chris S.

>DRAGON QUEST HEROES: ROCKET SLIME

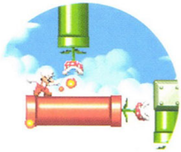
Don't overlook Dragon Quest Heroes just because you play as a stretchy blue slime. The game's collection aspect is addicting, the writing is brilliant, and the often-funky soundtrack is easily one of the best on DS.

—Chris H.

KORORINPA: MARBLE MANIA

Kororinpa isn't going to set the world on fire, but it's a nifty little puzzler that boasts some creative level design, responsive controls, and a pleasantly soothing soundtrack. Fans of the Super Monkey Ball series should definitely check it out; though lacking the personality of Sega's pantsless primates, Marble Mania offers a similar brand of addictive gameplay (minus the frustrating camera problems). —Steve T.

Hi Hi Puffy Amiyumi: The Genie and the Amp	4.5	D3PA	206	E10+
Hotel Dusk: Room 215	8.0	Nintendo	213	T
Inuyasha: Secret of The Divine Jewel	6.0	Namco Bandai	213	E10+
Izuna: Legend of the Unemployed Ninja	6.5	Atlus	213	E10+
Justice League Heroes	3.0	Warner Bros.Interactive	210	E10+
Kim Possible: Global Gemini	N/A	Buena Vista	214	E10+
Kirby: Squeak Squad	7.5	Nintendo	212	E
Konductra	N/A	O~3	208	E
Konami Classics Series: Arcade Hits	7.5	Konami	214	E10+
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	N/A	Sierra	209	E
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	4.5	LucasArts	209	E
Lost in Blue 2	5.0	Konami	215	E10+
LostMagic	8.0, 7.0	Ubisoft	204	E
Lunar Knights	8.0	Konami	213	E10+
Madden NFL 07	7.5	Electronic Arts	208	E
Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier	N/A	Namco Bandai	210	E10+
Magical Starsign	7.0	Nintendo	210	E
Magnetica	8.0	Nintendo	205	E
Mario Hoops 3-on-3	7.5	Nintendo	209	E
Mario Vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis	7.5	Nintendo	209	E
Marvel Trading Card Game	4.0	Konami	213	T
MechAssault: Phantom War	8.0	Majesco	209	T
Meet the Robinsons	N/A	Buena Vista	215	E10+
Mega Man ZX	8.5	Capcom	208	E
Meteos: Disney Magic	7.5	Buena Vista Games	214	E
Micro Machines V4	N/A	Codemasters	211	E
Mini RC Rally	N/A	Summitsoft	204	E
Monster Bomber	N/A	Majesco	212	E
Monster House	5.5	THQ	207	E
My Frogger: Toy Trials	N/A	Konami	211	E
Nacho Libre	7.0	Majesco	210	E10+
Need For Speed: Carbon	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
New Super Mario Bros.	9.5,9.5,9.5,9.5	Nintendo	205	E
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
Open Season	N/A	Ubisoft	209	E
Over the Hedge	6.0	Activision	205	E
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts	N/A	Activision	210	E
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice for All	9.0	Capcom	212	T
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	6.0	Buena Vista	206	T
Pogo Island	7.0	Electronic Arts	215	E
Point Blank DS	6.0	Namco Bandai	206	E10+
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team	8.0	Nintendo	209	E
Pokémon Ranger	7.0	Nintendo	210	E
Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords	4.0	D3PA	215	E10+
Quickspot	5.5	Namco Bandai	214	E10+
Rafa Nadal Tennis	N/A	Codemasters	213	E
Rainbow Islands Revolution	4.5	Codemasters	208	E
Rayman Raving Rabbids	7.0	Ubisoft	214	E
Scooby-Doo! Who's Watching Who?	6.5	THQ	210	E
The Sims 2 Pets	5.5	Electronic Arts	211	E
SNK Vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS	7.0	SNK Playmore	215	T
Spectrobes	8.0	Buena Vista Games	214	E
Spider-Man: Battle for New York	6.0	Activision	212	E10+
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	N/A	THQ	210	E
Star Fox Command	9.5	Nintendo	208	E10+
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	5.5	Bethesda	210	E
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	7.0	Ubisoft	212	E10+
Steel Horizon	4.5	Konami	214	E10+
The Suite Life of Zack & Cody	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E
Super Black Bass Fishing	4.5	Majesco	204	E
Tenchu: Dark Secret	5.0	Nintendo	208	T
That's So Raven: Psychic on the Scene	N/A	Buena Vista	210	E
Tom and Jerry Tales	N/A	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E
Tamagotchi Connection: Cornershop 2	N/A	Namco Bandai	211	E
Theme Park	6.0	Electronic Arts	215	E
TMNT	5.5	Konami	214	E10+
Tomb Raider: Legend	4.5	Eidos	210	T
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	211	E
Totally Spies! 2: Undercover	N/A	Atari	213	E10+
Touch Detective	6.0	Atlus	210	E10+
Trioncube	5.5	Namco Bandai	213	E
Wario: Master of Disguise	6.5	Nintendo	214	E10+
Winning Eleven Pro Evolution Soccer 2007	6.5	Konami	213	E
X-Men: The Official Game	7.0	Activision	205	E10+
Xiaolin Showdown	5.0	Konami	212	E
Yoshi's Island DS	8.0	Nintendo	211	E
Yu-Gi-Oh! Spirit Caller	N/A	Konami	213	E
Yu-Gi-Oh! World Championship Tournament 2007	N/A	Konami	215	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
2006 FIFA World Cup	7.5	Electronic Arts	204	E
Alex Rider: Stormbreaker	N/A	THQ	208	E10+
The Ant Bully	N/A	Midway	208	E
Arthur and the Invisibles	N/A	Atari	213	E
Avatar: The Last Airbender	N/A	THQ	210	E
Babar to the Rescue	N/A	THe Game Factory	206	E
Back to Stone	N/A	Grafitti Entertainment	214	E
Backyard Baseball 2007	3.5	Atari	204	E
Backyard Basketball 2007	N/A	Atari	209	E
The Barnyard	6.5	THQ	207	E
Battle B-Daman	6.5	Atlus	207	E
Battle B-Daman: Fire Spirits!	6.5	Atlus	210	E
Bionicle Heroes	N/A	Eidos	211	E
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
Cabbage Patch Kids: The Patch Puppy Rescue	N/A	D3PA	204	E
Capcom Classics Mini Mix	7.5	Capcom	209	T
Cars	6.5	THQ	206	E
Catz	N/A	Ubisoft	204	E
The Cheetah Girls	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E
Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long—Rise of the Huntsclan	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E10+
Eragon	N/A	Vivendi	211	E10+
FIFA 07	N/A	Electronic Arts	210	E
Final Fantasy V Advance	8.5	Nintendo	210	E
Final Fantasy VI Advance	9.5	Nintendo	213	E10+
Flushed Away	N/A	D3PA	210	E
Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	N/A	Crave Entertainment	213	E
Games Explosion!	4.0	THQ	208	E
Garfield and His Nine Lives	5.0	The Game Factory	204	E
Ghost Rider	N/A	2K Games	213	T
Harlem Globetrotters World Tour	N/A	DSI	211	E
Justic League Heroes: The Flash	5.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E10+
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	N/A	Sierra	209	E
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	N/A	LucasArts	209	E
Madden NFL 07	7.0	Electronic Arts	208	E
Mazes of Fate	N/A	Graffiti Entertainment	213	T
Meet the Robinsons	N/A	Buena Vista	215	E
Mega Man Battle Network 6: Cybeast Gregar & Cybeast Falzar	7.5	Capcom	206	E
Miss Spider's Harvest Time Hop & Fly	N/A	The Game Factory	206	E
Monster House	5.0	THQ	207	E
Naruto: Ninja Council 2	5.5	Tomy/D3PA	210	E10+
Need For Speed: Carbon	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
Open Season	N/A	Ubisoft	209	E
Over the Hedge	3.5	Activision	205	E
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts	N/A	Activision	210	E
Phil of the Future	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	7.5	Buena Vista	206	E10+
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team	8.0	Nintendo	209	E
Polarium Advance	N/A	Atlus	212	E
The Santa Clause 3	N/A	Buena Vista	209	E
Shrek Smash N' Crash Racing	N/A	Activision	213	E10+
The Sims 2 Pets	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
Sonic the Hedgehog Genesis	6.0	Sega	211	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	N/A	THQ	210	E
Sudoku Mania	N/A	UFO Interactive	206	E
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story	8.0	Atlus	207	E10+
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story 2	8.0	Atlus	210	E10+
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation	6.5	Atlus	207	T
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation 2	7.0	Atlus	211	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Double Pack	N/A	Konami	206	E
TMNT	7.0	Konami	214	E10+
Tom and Jerry Tales	N/A	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E
Tomb Raider: Legend	N/A	Eidos	210	T
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	211	E
Totally Spies! 2: Undercover	N/A	Atari	213	E10+
The Wild	N/A	Buena Vista	204	E
X-Men: The Official Game	3.5	Activision	205	E10+
Yggdra Union	7.5	Atlus	211	T
Yu-Gi-Oh! Ultimate Masters—World Championship Tournament 2006	6.0	Konami	204	E



NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.

The greatest aspect of New Super Mario Bros. is that it feels like a remake of the original Super Mario Bros. in terms of level design, pacing, and power-ups. As such, it focuses more on platforming than on the superzany power-ups that let you avoid some of the more difficult platforming in previous Super Mario Bros. games. Still, it would've been nice to see the Tanooki Suit.

— Giancarlo V.

>SSX BLUR

Uber tricks have long been the most insane element to SSX, so it makes sense that SSX Blur would employ equally exaggerated motion controls to pull them off. But Blur takes the idea too far, making some of the ubers difficult to pull off with any regularity.

—Andy M.

MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE

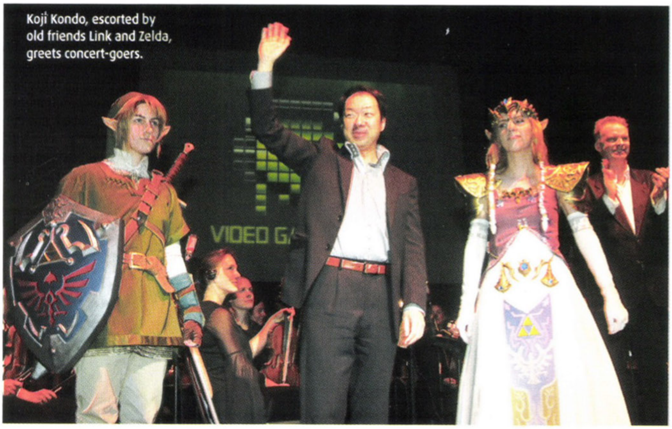
Let's say you enjoy corn, oysters, chocolate ice cream, asparagus, pickled eggs, and beef jerky. Each one may be okay individually, but would you use them to make a salad? That's pretty much how I feel about Ultimate Alliance. Putting 300 superheroes in a game means that none of them will get the treatment he or she deserves. It's cool and all to see Dr. Strange in a video game, but it's kind of sad to see him get lost in a crowd of colorful fists and elbows. And shields. And webs. —Drew W.

MUSIC

Mario Maestro

Video Games Live and legendary composer Koji Kondo come together for a once-in-a-lifetime performance, and NP was on hand to watch the master tickle the ivories.

Video Games Live—a concert event featuring orchestral arrangements from popular game franchises like Metal Gear Solid, Final Fantasy, and The Legend of Zelda—has been touring the globe for over a year now, but the recent show in San Francisco held special significance for Nintendo fans. In town for the Game Developers Conference, Koji Kondo not only made an appearance at the concert; he treated attendees to a piano medley consisting of themes from the original Super Mario Bros. It was a rare opportunity to see Nintendo's maestro perform live, and no one was as excited as fellow composer and Video Games Live cofounder Tommy Tallarico. "If it wasn't for him, I don't think any of us video game composers would be in the industry," declares Tallarico. "I remember playing Super Mario Bros. and thinking for the first time, 'Wow, the music in video games can be pretty significant.' It was the first time where I think music meant something in a video game."



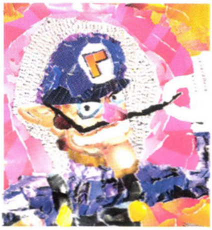
Koji Kondo, escorted by old friends Link and Zelda, greets concert-goers.

If you didn't get a chance to attend the San Francisco show, don't worry; Video Games Live is scheduled for more than 40 stops throughout 2007, and though Kondo's involvement was a one-time-only affair, every show will have its own special flavor. "Every performance we do, we try to do something a little different," says Tallarico. "For example, our next show is at Yale University. The building we're playing in is called Woolsey Hall. In 1903, they installed this three-story pipe organ. So [we] came up with an arrangement on pipe organ for Castlevania. And we're going to have some special guests at that show, too." To find out if Video Games Live is coming to your city, check out videogameslive.com. —**STEVE T.**

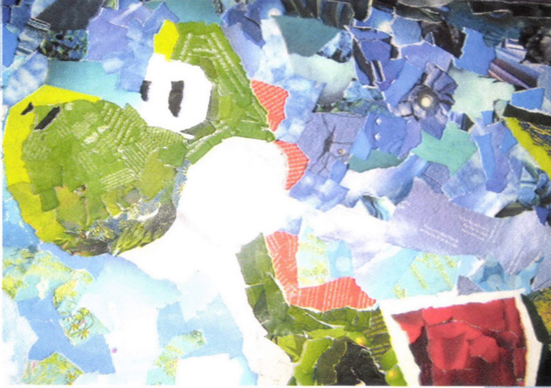
ART

Picture Pages

Normally we'd be offended when one of our readers rips up an issue of NP, but not this time. Subscriber Chris L. turned his collection of back issues into these amazing collages. It's great to see old NPs going to a good cause, but don't get carried away, people—a lot of love went into those pages! —Andy M.



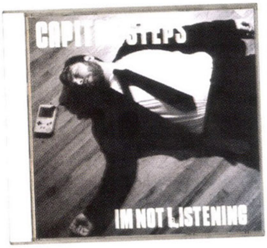
Seeing these collages brings back a lot of memories (sniff, sniff).



MUSIC

Game Boy Lives

Eccentric musicians have been creating music on classic Game Boy systems for many years. We've covered some of these musicians in past issues, but we've never given a nod to Capital Steps. We recently caught up with the one-man-band, Matthew Kenall, who had this to say about making music on a Game Boy: "I really love the 8-bit sound, but more than anything the Game Boy itself attracts me. It works as an inexpensive, unique electronic instrument. It is totally portable, which allows me to compose and perform in any environment." —Andy M.



Capital Steps has a new CD out this month entitled *I'm Not Listening*. Check out the project's MySpace page for information and sample tracks.

FOOD

Let Them Eat Link

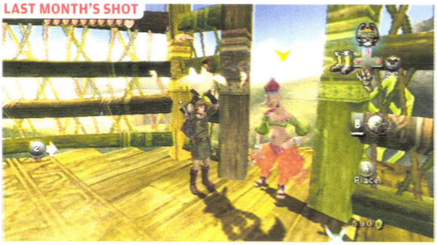
Young readers Josh C. and AJ F. of Kansas celebrated their birthdays Zelda-style, complete with costumes, Smash Bros. sessions, and these sweet Link cakes. The tasty treats were made by their mothers, Janey C. and Shari F. Nice work, ladies—how about a Twilight Princess cake next year? —Andy M.

SCREEN TEST

Testing . . . One, Two

After challenging our readers to best our Twilight Princess caption last month, we received exactly one bazillion entries. We're hoping to double that sum this month with a screenshot from Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin. Send your best caption (one per person, please) to community@nintendopower.com.

LAST MONTH'S SHOT



"Unsatisfied with the fish he had been catching recently, Link decided it was time to try a slightly bigger bait." -Sean C.

"20 Rupees? See that three-foot piece of metal on my back? It says I go free." -obiwan_nick

"You get a CHICKEN? All I have is this lousy yellow thing." -netherphoenix

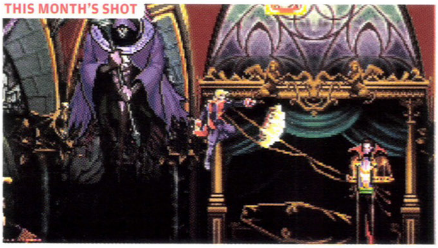
"Im in ur coop, stealin ur chickens." -mikedills

"You thinkin' what I'm thinkin'?" -mariofreak

"Sorry about clucky. Ever since the incident with Ronald McDonald, he's been nervous around clowns." -celebino251

"Not right now, Link—animal control is on to us." -George B.

THIS MONTH'S SHOT



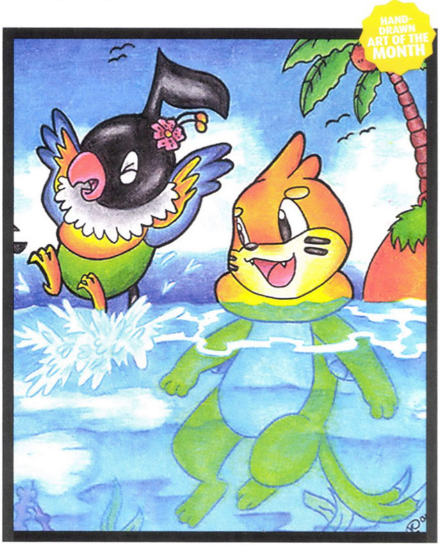
"Grandma Morris's garlic-cream pie is both deadly *and* delicious."

HERE'S OUR CAPTION.
Think you can do better?

ART OF THE MONTH

Caught in the Wild

Nyami's excellent shading work brings new Pokémon Chatot and Buizel to gorgeous life. We decided to hold off on showing this month's winning computer-drawn art, as it reveals some big-time spoilers; we'll be sure to show GoddessZelda's winning design at a more appropriate time.


HAND-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH

ARTIST:
NYAMI

SUBJECT:
POKéMON DIAMOND AND POKéMON PEARL

Looking to submit art for the first time and not sure what to do? Visit **forums.nintendo.com** for details. Be sure to read the rules before you post your masterpieces.

CALL TO ACTION

Let 'Er Rip!

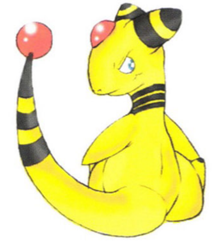
Normally we don't condone the destruction of our magazine issues, but we got a huge kick out of Chris L.'s collages this month. Have you done something interesting with your old issues of NP? Drop us a line and let us know about it—maybe it'll show up in Community!

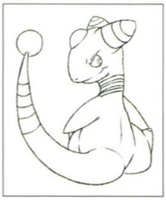
community@nintendopower.com

FORUMS.NINTENDO.COM

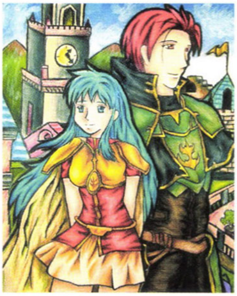
In Living Color

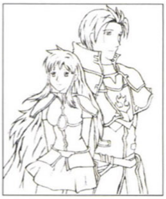
We recently decided to check back in with one of the cool things the people on nintendo.com's art forums are doing—the NSider coloring book. Artists post black-and-white sketches of video game characters and scenes, then invite other NSiders to color in the image. Feel free to give it a shot yourself; the coloring book is a great way to participate in the art events even for those who aren't that confident with their own abilities. —**CHRIS S.**



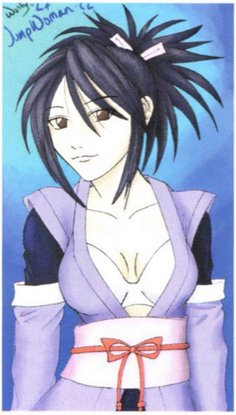


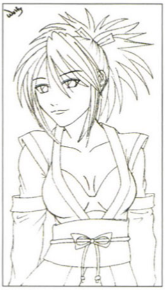
The Pokémon Ampharos has a relatively simple design; shading gives it a 3-D look.





This person took a portrait sketch from Fire Emblem and added the clock tower to create a complete scene.





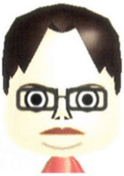
Only a handful of hues were necessary to bring Tales of Symphonia's Sheena to life.

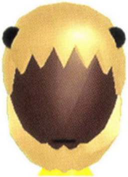
MII OF THE MONTH

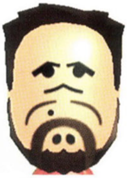
The Amazing Dog-Man!

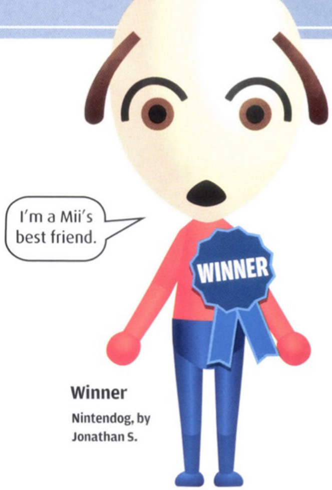
The people have spoken—er, emailed—and they want Miis! We're still in shock from the vast number of Mii photos pouring into our inbox, but what really surprises us is how creative our readers are. We have received some truly amazing achievements, and it's been difficult to choose only four to feature here. This month we found Jonathan S.'s dog to be the most impressive. Thanks to everyone who participated, and keep 'em coming—we look closely at every submission. Snap a photo of your Mii and send it to community@nintendopower.com. —ANDY M.

Runners-Up:


Dwight from *The Office*, by Aaron K.


Untitled, by Moses U.


ALF, by Derreck B.


I'm a Mii's best friend.
WINNER

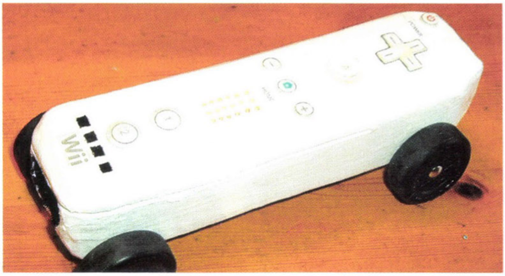
Winner

Nintendog, by Jonathan S.

ARTS & CRAFTS

Pining for Wii!

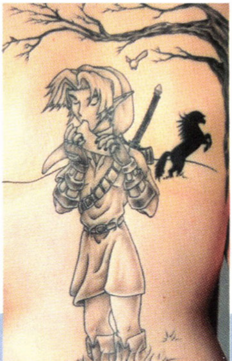
Young NP reader Benjamin S. crafted this amazing replica of the Wii remote out of pinewood for a race held by Cub Scout Pack 66 of West Windsor, New Jersey. We just hope no one tried to race using the wrist strap. —GIANCARLO V.



TATTOO

A Legend in the Making

Legend of Zelda fan Erica C. wanted to show us her tattoo inspired by Ocarina of Time. Erica says the massive tattoo is only about halfway done, so there's still a lot of work to come, but the Zelda faithful will immediately recognize Link and his trusty steed, Epona, prancing in the background. We can't wait to see the finished piece. —GIANCARLO V.



SUBSCRIBER PROFILE

Meet a fellow NP reader and Nintendo fan.

Name:
Jessica J.

Age:
20

Subscriber since:
2003

Favorite game:
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

Nsider Tag:
Zelda1986

Our subscribers are awesome, so we figured, Why not give them their own spot in the mag? We'll kick it off with Jessica, a college student and longtime Nintendo fan. Like many of our readers, Jessica's all about playing Wii right now. "I waited hours upon hours in the freezing cold for it." We wonder if her grades have dipped since last November.

July 2007 Vol. 217

NEXT MONTH

They will be anything but the dog days of summer for Wii and DS. Take a look at a few highlights that are coming your way in July.

THE EVIL WITHIN

Capcom revisits the Resident Evil universe with Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles for Wii. We'll bring you more in-depth coverage than you can shake a zombie at.

ROLL OUT!

Autobots and Decepticons take their eternal battle to Wii and DS. Get all the latest on the Transformers in our preview.

AHOY SAILOR

Time to go treasure hunting! We're diving deep into Zack's adventure with the cursed pirate Barbaros in Project Treasure Island Z for Wii.

JUST A BIT OUTSIDE

2K Games swings for the fences with The Bigs, its new take on the world of professional baseball. We'll have all the highlights for you.

+ *All About Mii*

READY THE Mii PARADE FOR INSPECTION! WE'LL HAVE COVERAGE ON THE NEXT ROUND OF Wii GAMES TO FEATURE YOUR LOVABLE CARICATURES.

CONTACTS

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1-800-255-3700
(1-800-422-4281 TDD)
Note: 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Pacific Standard Time, every day. French- and Spanish-speaking representatives are available. (We are unable to answer gameplay questions on this line.)

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pokemon_community@nintendopower.com
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E-mail sent to the above addresses will not receive a response.

ESRB GAME RATING INFORMATION
To contact the ESRB or for more information, visit www.esrb.org.
The Entertainment Software Rating Board evaluates each game's content and assigns one of the following ratings to reflect the appropriate age group for the game.

Early Childhood
Everyone
Everyone (10+)
Teen (13+)
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Rating Pending

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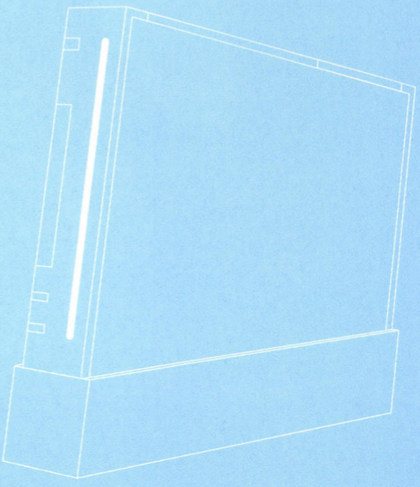
- Participation at Nintendo's official online community



* 'My Nintendo' memberships only valid in U.S. and Canada.
** Some restrictions may apply.
‡ For information about your current Wii Console warranty, please refer to the Wii Operations Manual.

NINTENDO POWER®

Your Official Nintendo Magazine!

THE OFFICIAL GUI
NINTENDO DS
DIAMOND VERSION
THE OFFICIAL Nintendo PLAYER'S GUIDE

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E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

WIN WITH Wii ENTER THE SSX BLUR SWEEPSTAKES
NINTENDO POWER
›HOW TO BUILD A BETTER CUSTOM ROBO
›REPORTING FOR DUTY BROTHERS IN ARMS Wii
EXCLUSIVE
POKéMON PERSPECTIVES
THE POKéMON DIAMOND AND POKéMON PEARL CREATORS DISCUSS GOING WIRELESS, GLOBAL TRADE, AND THE FUTURE OF THE LEGENDARY FRANCHISE.

Wii PREVIEWS YOU CAN'T REFUSE
THE GODFATHER: BLACKHAND EDITION
ALIEN SYNDROME
NINTENDO POWER
Super Paper Mario Unfolds on Wii
WORLD EXCLUSIVE
Wii THE SIMS
EA FORMS A MORE PERFECT VIDEOGAME

MARIO SCORES WITH FINAL FANT
PLUS: MAGICAL STARSIGN » MEGA MAN ZX » MADDEN N
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Bunnies Gone Bad
Rayman's Wii Adventure Goes Raving Mad!

ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS UPD
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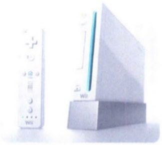
3
THE GAME

EVEN THE NOBLEST
OF SUPER HEROES™
HAS A DARK SIDE.
UNLEASH IT.

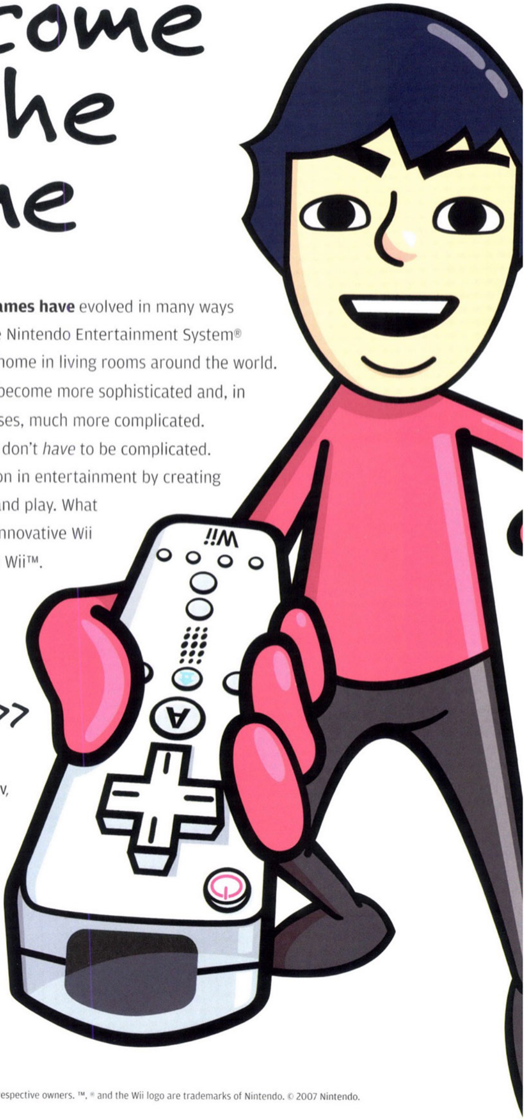
Wii Welcome You

introducing Wii:

Welcome to the Game



Video games have evolved in many ways since the Nintendo Entertainment System® found a home in living rooms around the world. They've become more sophisticated and, in many cases, much more complicated. But they don't *have* to be complicated. Nintendo has sparked a revolution in entertainment by creating games that anyone can pick up and play. What makes them so accessible? The innovative Wii Remote™. Pick it up. Turn on the Wii™. You'll discover that video games have finally caught up to you.



Wii Remote >>

Point it

Thanks to a sensor bar that sits on your TV, the Wii Remote can be used as a precise pointing tool. Move cursors and objects on the screen with a flick of the wrist!

Move it

Whenever you swing, shake, or tilt the Wii Remote, onboard sensors are paying attention.

Click it

The Wii Remote's layout is flexible enough to handle most gaming tasks—and often the big A Button is all you'll need.

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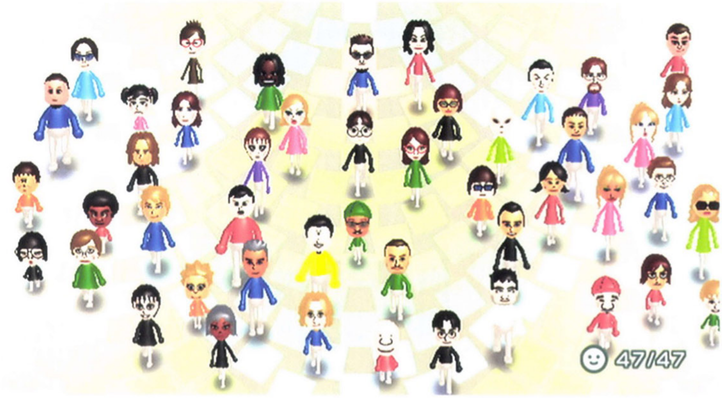
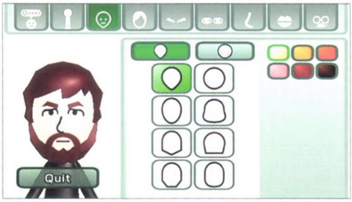


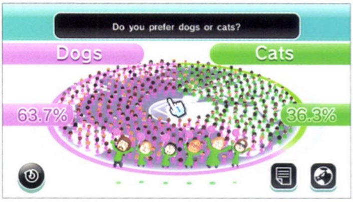
Wii has many faces, and they belong to the Miis. Create them, share them, play games with them.

Wii Is Many Miis

Every game console needs a mascot, and Wii's mascot is you . . . and everyone you know. On the Mii™ Channel, you can create characters using a simple editing tool, then have them parade across your screen, or use them in some of the games you play. Using a friend code—a special number assigned to each Wii—you can even send your Miis directly to another Wii console. You can start making Miis right after you hook up your Wii. Who will you make first?

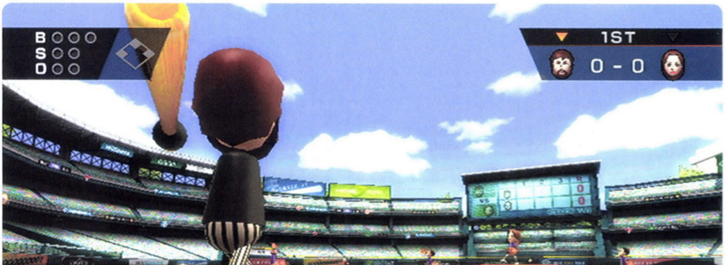


Select and adjust attributes for your Mii using a simple set of menus on the Wii Channel.



Do you prefer dogs or cats?

Miis pop up in all sorts of places. On the Everybody Votes Channel, you use them to vote on simple questions.



EVERYONE
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CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

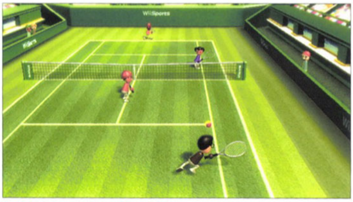
Swing for the Fences...

You've probably played a sports video game before, but have you ever felt like you were actually playing the game? Wii Sports™ uses the motion sensors inside the Wii Remote to simulate the actual sport being played onscreen. Choke up on the Wii Remote and swing away like a major-league slugger. Unleash a killer backhand. Ask for complete silence as you tap in a game-winning putt. Wii Sports streamlines the experience to put you in the middle of the action. There's plenty of room for you to improve and excel, but anybody can jump in and compete.

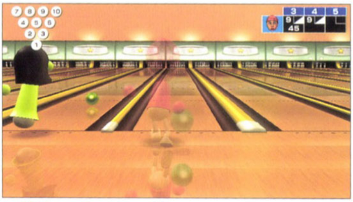
> << Wii Sports strips games down to their essence. Baseball is a duel between pitcher and batter. Tennis involves long, acrobatic volleys. Boxing is all about dodging, covering up and jabbing.

...or Just Play Around

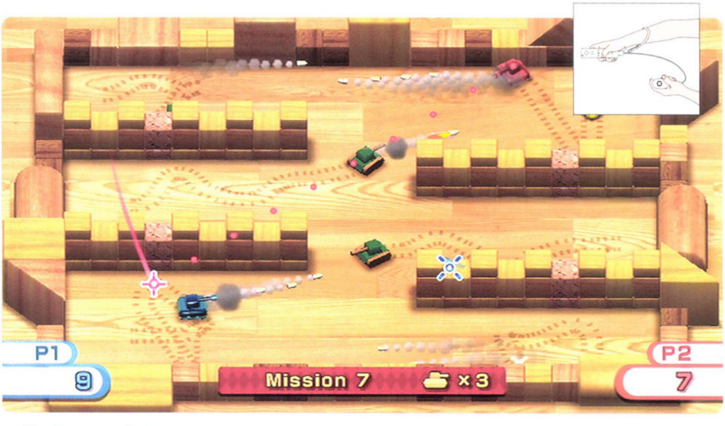
If you feel like putting down your racket and clubs for a while, try picking up a few of the casual games available in Wii Play™. Its nine simple activities offer a diversion for anyone, from would-be pool sharks to armchair soldiers. When you want to move on to new challenges, Wii has you covered: its ever-growing library runs the gamut from wacky party games to earth-shaking adventures.



Wii Sports Tennis: Up to four people can compete on the courts in Wii Sports Tennis. The controls are simple, but you can hit the ball many different ways.



Wii Sports Bowling: You can control your release and put a spin on the ball—just by flicking and twisting the Wii Remote. In Wii Sports, a 300 game is within reach.



Wii Play Tanks!: Take a tank into the toughest neighborhood in the Wii Play toybox. You can steer your tank using a special Nunchuk controller that's connected to the Wii Remote, then use the remote as a pointer to aim your shots.

A Link to the Past

Innovative games are nothing new for Nintendo. Head for the online Wii™ Shop Channel and Virtual Console™ to sample some landmark achievements in gaming history for yourself. There are piles of classic games available on Virtual Console, and additional games are added each week. Rediscover well-loved titles like Super Mario Bros.® or try out games you may have missed the first time around, like the ground-breaking Legend of Zelda®: Ocarina of Time or Kid Icarus®. Virtual Console offers the finest titles from the NES®, Super NES® and Nintendo 64®, plus top-notch games from the Sega Genesis™ and TurboGrafx-16™ consoles. All the games you buy are stored in the Wii's system memory, so you can play them whenever you like.

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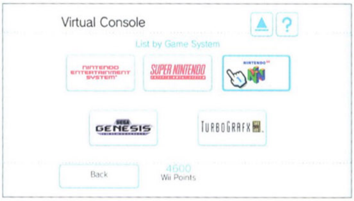
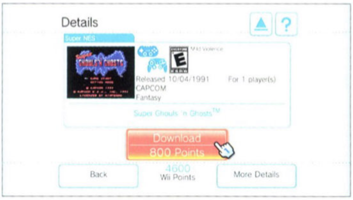

Virtual Console
?
List by Game System
Nintendo Entertainment System
Super Nintendo
Nintendo 64
Genesis
TurboGrafx
Back
4600
Wii Points

Looking for something fun to play? Browse through the extensive catalog of classic games on the Wii Shop Channel.


Details
?
Super NES
Download
800 Points
Back
More Details

Mild Violence
Released 10/04/1991
For 1 player(s)
CAPCOM
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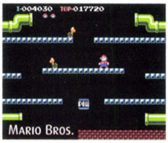
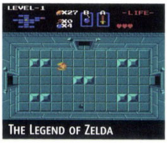
Super Ghouls 'n Ghosts™
4600 Wii Points

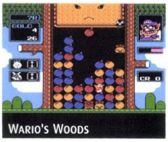
Purchase a Wii Points Card or buy Wii Points online using a credit card, then download a game. It's simple and fast.

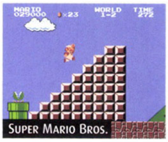
A Virtual Gold Mine of Classic Games

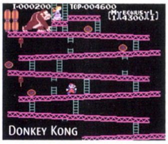
THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME


MARIO BROS.


THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

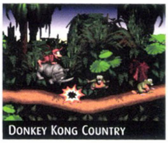

WARIO'S WOODS

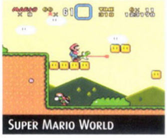

SUPER MARIO BROS.


DONKEY KONG

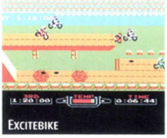
F-ZERO

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST


DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

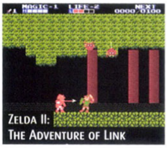


Super Mario World

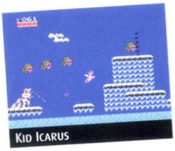


Excitebike

Super Mario 64



Zelda II:
The Adventure of Link



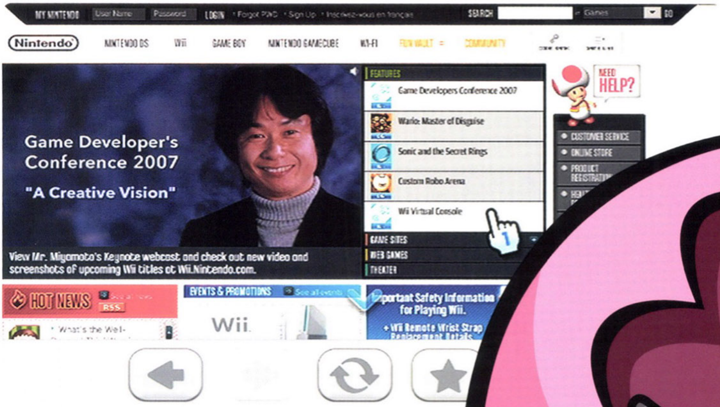
Kid Icarus

Nintendo's rich history of classic games is only a click away on Virtual Console.

Mario Kart 64

Tecmo Bowl

Kirby's Adventure


MY NINTENDO
User Name
Password
LOGIN
SEARCH
GO
Nintendo
NINTENDO DS
Wii
GAME BOY
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
WI-FI
FEATURES
GAME SITES
WEB GAMES
THEATER
NEED HELP?
CUSTOMER SERVICE
ONLINE STORE
PRODUCT REGISTRATION
HOT NEWS
RSS
EVENTS & PROMOTIONS
Wii

Game Developer's Conference 2007

"A Creative Vision"

View Mr. Miyamoto's Keynote webcast and check out new video and screenshots of upcoming Wii titles at Wii.Nintendo.com.

Game Developers Conference 2007

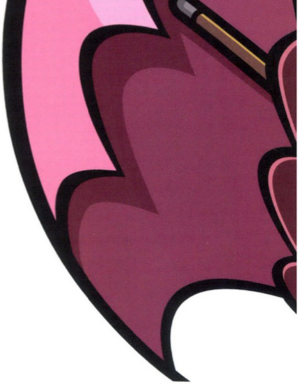
Wario: Master of Disguise

Sonic and the Secret Rings

Custom Robo Arena

Wii Virtual Console

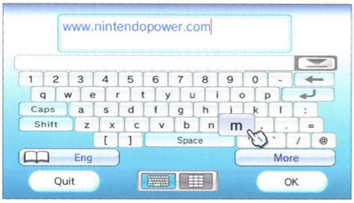
Important Safety Information for Playing Wii.



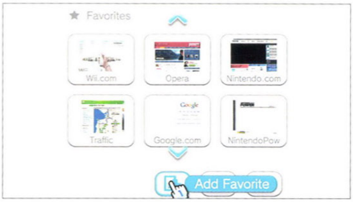
Wii connects you to the world with its Internet browser and 24-hour news and weather coverage.

Get Online

Leave the keyboard on your desk—you can surf the Internet using the Wii Remote and the Internet browser (available on the Wii Shop Channel). The Wii Remote makes it easy to navigate from your sofa and share the experience with other people. When you need to type a Web address, just bring up the keyboard interface and punch in the letters with the cursor.


www.nintendopower.com
Caps
Shift
Space
Eng
More
Quit
OK

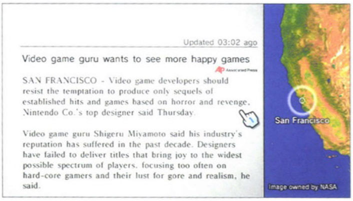
A handy keyboard interface makes it easy to type in new web addresses . . .


Favorites
Wii.com
Opera
Nintendo.com
Traffic
Google.com
NintendoPow
Add Favorite

. . . and you can add sites you visit regularly to the favorites menu for easy access.

Stay Current with Wii

When you want to take a break from playing games, find out what's going on in the world. Wii's Forecast Channel can give you the latest weather info from around the globe, and a five-day forecast for regions near you. If you want news with your weather, hop over to the News Channel. It features Associated Press news stories you can trust and a flexible interface that lets you search for stories a number of ways. If your Wii is linked to a Wi-Fi router, the News Channel and the Forecast Channel will be updated automatically 24 hours a day, so you always get the latest information.



Updated 03:02 ago

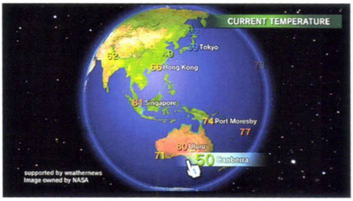
Video game guru wants to see more happy games

SAN FRANCISCO - Video game developers should resist the temptation to produce only sequels of established hits and games based on horror and revenge, Nintendo Co.'s top designer said Thursday.

Video game guru Shigeru Miyamoto said his industry's reputation has suffered in the past decade. Designers have failed to deliver titles that bring joy to the widest possible spectrum of players, focusing too often on hard-core gamers and their lust for gore and realism, he said.

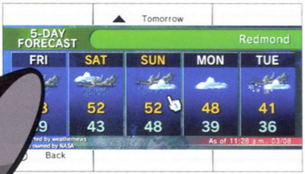
Associated Press
San Francisco
Image owned by NASA

News Channel: Catch up on the headlines by browsing the News Channel. It's updated automatically through a Wi-Fi connection.



CURRENT TEMPERATURE
Tokyo
62
66 Hong Kong
73
81 Singapore
74 Port Moresby
77
80 Uluru
71
50 Canberra
supported by weathernews
Image owned by NASA

Forecast Channel: Spin the globe to check the weather in other parts of the world. Is there rain in Ireland? Snow in Alaska? Now you know.



Tomorrow
5-DAY FORECAST
Redmond

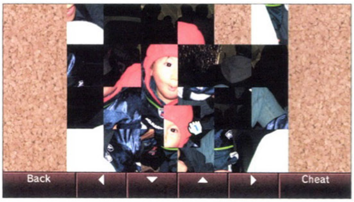
FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE
3	52	52	48	41
9	43	48	39	36

ted by weathernews
owned by NASA
As of 11:28 a.m., 03/08
Back

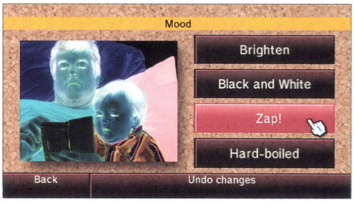
How's your week looking? A five-day forecast is at your fingertips on the Forecast Channel.

Play with Your Pics

Many high-tech shutterbugs end up with hundreds of digital camera files that stagnate on their computer hard drives and never see the light of day. With the Photo Channel, you can bring your pictures to life on your television screen. Using a standard SD memory card, you can display and manipulate images in a variety of ways. You can even send a photo to another Wii owner via the online message board. Put on a slide show with music or turn a picture into a puzzle—digital images become playthings on the Photo Channel!

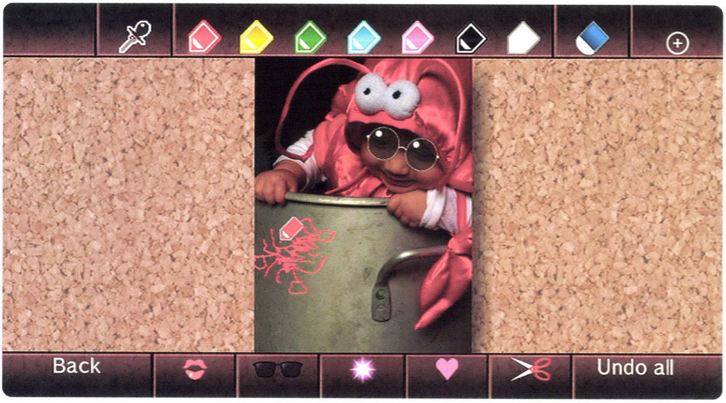


Turn your favorite images into puzzles. Now you have as many puzzles as you do pictures!


Mood
Brighten
Black and White
Zap!
Hard-boiled
Back
Undo changes

Experiment with wacky effects to make your pictures more interesting—or, at least, weird.

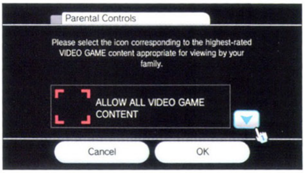
Add doodles and design elements to your pictures, then display your handiwork on your TV.


Back
Undo all

Wii Safety

Many parents are concerned about the types of games their children play. With Wii's integrated parental controls, you can ensure that children stay away from material designed for adults or older gamers.

Parental Controls

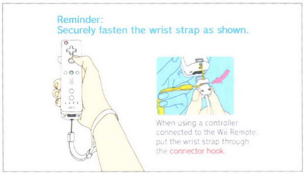


Please select the icon corresponding to the highest-rated VIDEO GAME content appropriate for viewing by your family.

ALLOW ALL VIDEO GAME CONTENT

It's simple to set up parental controls in the Wii's System Settings menu. For more information visit wii.nintendo.com/parentalcontrols.jsp

Play It Safe



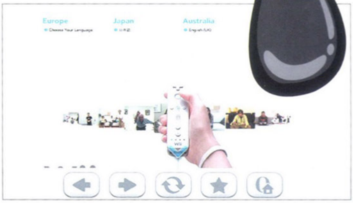
Reminder:
Securely fasten the wrist strap as shown.

When using a controller connected to the Wii Remote, put the wrist strap through the connector hook.

Nintendo includes a safety strap for use with each Wii Remote. Review the Wii operations manual and/or www.nintendo.com/healthsafety for important health and safety information.

Want to Learn More?

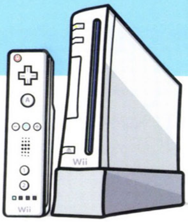
There's much more to learn about Wii, and Wii.com has the answers to your questions. Check the site regularly to get the scoop on Wii games and software.

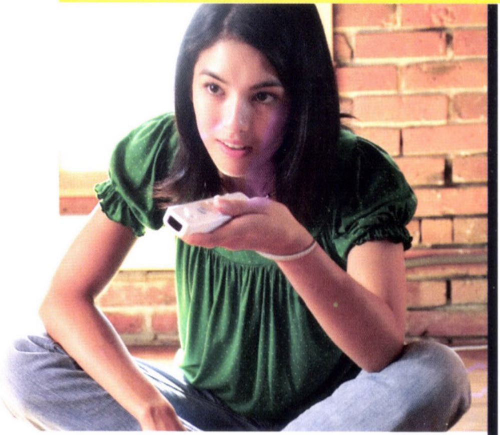


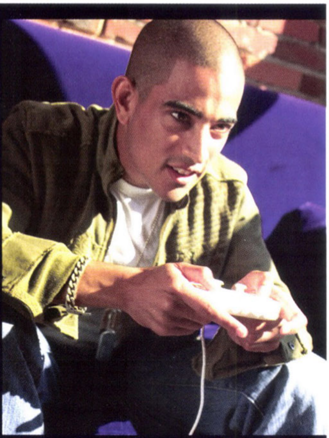
Visit Wii.com for all the latest information about the Wii. The site also provides technical support.

Do you already own Wii? Share this booklet with a friend!

For more information about Wii, please visit www.Wii.com







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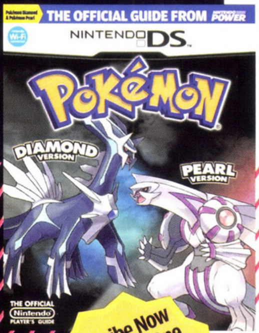
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NINTENDO DS
POKéMON
DIAMOND VERSION
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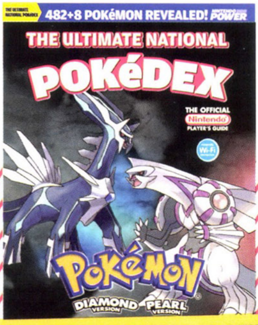
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